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**Conscience, Conviction and Contention
Religious Diversity in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century English Church**

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*Conscience, Conviction and Contention: Religious
Diversity in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century
English Church*

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy: Theology and Religious
Studies, King's College London, by Michael David Tanner

Abstract

The subject of this research thesis is religious diversity and division within the early modern English Church. Its objective — in a development of my Master's dissertation research into the Admonition Controversy of the 1570s¹ — is to reveal the nature of disagreements which culminated in the split between the Church of England and Nonconformity in the early 1660s, the 'Great Ejection'. What were the imperative incentives, the religious convictions, which motivated the participants, given the deprivation suffered by those driven from their positions of ministry, and the consequences suffered by the national Church in England?

The thesis makes a comparative study of events in the late sixteenth century, when controversy in the Elizabethan Church did not result in division: rather the incentive was towards consensus, and a rejection of separation. Why was this, given that the issues at stake were not dissimilar and no less contentious?

Having defined the terminology to be used, and explored the historiographical and analytical contributions from historians and theologians, the thesis moves to an exploration of primary evidence from the times under review, the documentary evidence extant from religious controversies during the periods, and the polemical literature from principal participants in religious debate in the late sixteenth, and mid-seventeenth centuries in England.

The thesis draws together conclusions resulting from this research, and seeks to make meaningful observations regarding the nature and causes of religious divisions in any century, and then to make comment upon disagreements between Christian believers in our own time, drawing upon the nature of division as revealed in English Christendom's post-Reformation history.

¹ Michael Tanner, 'The 'Admonition Controversy' and the 'Puritan' Agenda Within the English Church in the 1570s, with Particular Reference to the Elizabethan Book of Common Prayer', Master of Arts degree dissertation, History of Christianity, (London, 2002)

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My thanks are also due to the clergy and members of my regular Church, St. Mary's, Hailsham, and also to members of the Chichester Diocesan Readers' Committee for their practical and inspirational support. Finally, my warmest appreciation must be reserved for my wife, Pamela, my family, and my friends for their never failing encouragement and patient understanding.

² JSTOR: *Journal Storage* online system.

Notes on Conventions

In quotations drawn from primary sources, spelling and capitalisation remain as in the original — unless specified otherwise — but the practice of capitalising whole words and the frequent use of italics has not been followed. With quotations drawn from secondary sources, that source's convention has been followed, and any American spelling has been Anglicised. Biblical quotations are from the 'King James' version.

Surnames together with first names or initials are given at the first mention of individuals: thereafter — almost always — surnames only, except where there is a need to differentiate between those having the same surname.

In the Bibliography and the list of Abbreviations, the place of publication and date of the edition consulted are given, preceded where applicable by the place and date of the first edition. The common use in the title page of early sources of a capital for the first letter of every word has not been followed. Roman numerals are used for volume numbers and page numbers are in Arabic.

In the list of Abbreviations, lengthy titles have been abridged. The purpose of the extensive list of Abbreviations is to facilitate the reduction in the size of footnotes and their complexity. Early modern publications tend to employ lengthy titles and these would need to be abbreviated anyway. This convention is intended to give consistency with simplicity of reference.

Dates

Dates are Old Style, i.e., according to the Julian calendar. Early modern English practice was normally to begin the year of grace on 25 March. In order to avoid confusion, the split date is given for dates falling between 1 January and 24 March where this is known. Thus: 22 February 1584/5 means 1584 according to early modern usage, but 1585 according to modern usage.

When quoting from secondary sources, the dating convention of that source has been followed.

List of Abbreviations

- Abbot, *Reasons* George Abbot, *The Reasons Which Doctor Hill hath Brought, for the upholding of Papistry, ...* (Oxford, 1604) [STC, 37]
- Abernathy, ‘English Presbyterians’ George Ross Abernathy, ‘English Presbyterians and the Stuart Restoration 1648-1663’, in *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, 55, pt2 (1965), pp.1-101
- ‘Act of Uniformity, 1559’ ‘Elizabeth’s Act of Uniformity. A.D. 1559, 1 Elizabeth, Cap. 2’, in Henry Gee and William John Hardy (eds), *Documents Illustrative of English Church History* (New York, 1896), pp.458-467, reprinted here in Appendix I (a), pp.309-313
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- Allen, ‘The Atonement’ David L. Allen, ‘The Atonement: Limited or Universal?’, in David L. Allen and Steve W. Lemke, *Whosoever Will: A Biblical-Theological Critique of Five-Point Calvinism* (Nashville, Tennessee, 2010), pp.61-108
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- Allison, *Moralism* C. Fitzsimons Allison, *The Rise of Moralism: The Proclamation of the Gospel from Hooker to Baxter* (New York, 1966; Vancouver, British Columbia, 2003)
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- Andrewes, *Catechistical Doctrine* Lancelot Andrewes, *The Pattern of Catechistical Doctrine at Large ...* (London, 1650) [Wing, A3147]
- Andrewes, *Concerning Prayer* Lancelot Andrewes, *Scala coeli Nineteene Sermons Concerning Prayer* (London, 1611) [STC, 605]
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- Anon., *Liberty of
Conscience* Anon., *Liberty of Conscience Confuted* ... (London, 1648) [*Wing*, L1963]
- Anon., 'Review' Anon., 'Review' of Thomas W. Street, doctoral thesis, 'John Calvin on Adiaphora: An Exposition and Appraisal of his Theory and Practice', Union Theological Seminary (New York, 1955) in *Church History*, 27 (1958), pp.70-71
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Civil War* R. Ashton, *The English Civil War: Conservatism and Revolution* (London, 1978)
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Introduction

For my part ... I thought religion rightly practiced on both sides would have made us all better friends.

Daniel Defoe¹

I recommend that you study church history. It will make you cry.

Frank Viola²

On May 19, 1662, before the gathered assembly of both Houses of the English Parliament, an Act for the Uniformity of Public Prayers, &c. received royal assent from Charles II.³ The Clerk to the Parliaments pronounced *‘Le Roy le veult’*, and with these words this historic Bill, which was to have such momentous consequences for the life of the Christian Church in England, became law. Enacted by the ‘Cavalier Parliament’ elected in May 1661, its purpose, as confirmed in its preamble, was to re-establish the effects of the Uniformity Act embodied in the Elizabethan Church Settlement of 1559.⁴ The 1662 Act, which was passed without any provision for mitigation, required all clergy to have received episcopal ordination, obliging them to give their ‘unfeigned assent and consent’ to the 1662 revision of the *Book of Common Prayer*, agreeing thereby to conform in practice to the liturgy of the Church of England. By August 17, all Church services were to be conducted in accordance with the revised Prayer Book,⁵ and clergy were required, at a service of both Morning and Evening Prayer, to publicly give assent and declare their conformity before their assembled congregations. Additionally they were compelled to affirm their renunciation of all commitments incurred under the Solemn League and Covenant of 1643. Anyone failing to give these undertakings by August 24, 1662, St. Bartholomew’s Day, were to be deprived of their livings: ‘all his Ecclesiastical Promotions shall be void as if he was naturally dead’.⁶ In the event, hundreds of ministers chose to refuse subscription and, as a consequence, were ejected from their benefices, their decision leaving them deprived of their ministry and livelihood, putting many of them in abject poverty. All but a few were never to return to ministry in the national Church. Against their wills, they had been forced to become linked with the ranks of Dissent and, by default, Nonconformity became a permanent distinct

¹ Daniel Defoe, *Memoirs of a Cavalier* (Edinburgh, 1720; Oxford, 1991), p.165

² Viola, *From Eternity*, p.298

³ 14 Car. II, c. 4, *Statutes of the Realm*, V, pp.364-370. This date is in dispute. It is confirmed by, Bayne, *Documents*, p.455, Adams and Stephens, *Documents*, pp.427-431, and Green, *Re-Establishment*, p.144. July 29, 1662 is the date given by Appleby, *Black Bartholomew*, p.2 and Matthews, *Calamy Revised*, p.xi.

⁴ Browning, *Documents*, p.377

⁵ The 1662 Prayer Book was not published until August 6, and the majority of clergy had not seen a copy by August 24: Bayne, *Documents*, pp.459-460 and Green *Re-establishment*, p.145

⁶ 1662 Act of Uniformity, Section IX, see Appendix I, p.320

feature in England. Given the enormous price these men were to pay, why was it that their consciences would not allow them to conform?

In exploring the ideologies that were the driving force for religious discourse in the hundred or so years that followed the English Church's⁷ break with Rome in the 1530s, it is apparent that they were decades in which the foundations of united belief and practice were being subverted notwithstanding all attempts to secure them. In early modern England religious truth was held to be single and indivisible. The concept of religious plurality was unknown; to permit the existence of unorthodox belief was to tolerate error and few were prepared to 'contend for the freedom of other men to be wrong'.⁸ As the anonymous author of *Liberty of Conscience Confuted* (1648) asserted,

the grand Error of this our Factious age; That a plurality of Religions conduces to the peace and tranquillity of a Commonwealth; ... [is] nothing but the delusion of ignorant zeale, ... Atheisme cunningly disguised under the specious visard of Liberty of Conscience.⁹

Whether by royal or ecclesiastical decree: whether by the imposition of Acts of Uniformity or by the enforcement of articles of religion or confessions of faith, it was the establishment's conviction that divergent belief and practice had to be brought into line for the unity of the Church, to protect the souls of its people, and for reasons of national security.

But, as Conrad Russell has observed, 'so long as governments enforced religion in a divided society, they put perpetual strains on the system'.¹⁰ He maintains that 'one of the major difficulties of seventeenth-century England was that it was a society with several religions, whilst still remaining a society with a code of values and a political system which were only designed to be workable with one'.¹¹ Whilst religious stability might have been the objective, these years witnessed a progressive destabilisation in the religious arena caused largely by inflexible attempts to achieve a united order. Huge pressures both for and against divergence were brought to bear upon those within the Church, and Protestant unity in England was ultimately broken forever. As Ann Hughes notes, 'a religious marketplace had emerged';¹² the era of doctrinal pluralism had arrived. The very prescriptions that were intended to bring about united belief had become so diverse in both number and

⁷ 'English Church': in this thesis, England's national Church — the Church of England — unless otherwise defined in a broader sense. See pp.53-54

⁸ Chadwick, 'Introduction', p.8

⁹ Anon., *Liberty of Conscience Confuted*, Preface

¹⁰ Russell, *Causes*, p.66

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.63

¹² Hughes, 'Religion', p.372

content that they themselves contributed to division and the emerging religious plurality, a state of affairs aptly described by John Milton (1608-1674):

Behold now this vast City; a City of refuge, the mansion house of liberty, ... all the Lord's people are become prophets ... wholly taken up with the study of the highest and most important matters to be reformed ... disputing, reasoning, reading, inventing, discoursing.¹³

Milton accepted the Bible as his rule of faith,¹⁴ but for him Scripture was given for the benefit of every individual conscience. This was seen as the foundation of 'our protestant religion', we have 'no other divine rule or authorite ... but the holy scripture', and 'no man, no synod, no session of men, though calld [*sic*] the church, can judge definitively the sense of scripture to another mans conscience'.¹⁵ Milton argued for

a free and lawful debate ... of what opinion soever, disputable by scripture: concluding, that no man in religion is properly a heretic ... but he who maintains traditions or opinions not provable by scripture; ... he only is a heretic, who counts all heretics but himself.¹⁶

Given the plethora of interpretations that resulted, including Milton's own unorthodox beliefs, we can understand the reasoning behind John Henry Newman's nineteenth-century assertion that Scripture alone, in the hands of the individual, is a recipe for deviance.¹⁷ The chances 'are very seriously against' a person gaining the whole truth from reading Scripture alone. For Newman, the Catholic (universal) Church is the authoritative interpreter of Scripture's inspired revelation, not the individual lay or clerical interpreter.¹⁸ In the seventeenth century, Jeremy Taylor (1613-1667) agreed:

If a free use ... of all Scriptures were permitted, should not the Church herself have more cause to complain of the infinite licentiousness and looseness of interpretations, and of the commencement of ten thousand errors which would certainly be consequent to such permission.¹⁹

The mid-seventeenth century appears to give credence to their reasoning. As a willingness to engage in open debate was rejected in an atmosphere of intolerance, the capacity for those holding divergent religious interpretations to work together became 'fatally compromised, as the ... bitter cleavage of Bartholomew's day 1662 amply revealed'.²⁰ Tensions arising from divided interpretations regarding doctrine and Church practice finally proved too strong. It became impossible to hold back the tide of change.

¹³ Milton, *Areopagitica*, pp.31, 32 and 33

¹⁴ 'Rule of faith': in this thesis, the ultimate authority in religious belief.

¹⁵ Milton, *Civil Power*, pp.5 and 19

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.22-23

¹⁷ Newman, *Lectures*, p.189

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Taylor, *Collection of Offices*, Preface, [p.25]

²⁰ Hughes, 'Religion', p.372

In order to understand the nature of the religious convictions that were to cause the break in the Church in the 1660s we must take an overview of the evolution of religious controversy in the whole period, right from the time of the Reformation in England. It is appreciated that this is an ambitious task in a project of this nature and for this reason I shall be seeking to concentrate on the controversies of the mid-seventeenth century that resulted in the ejections of 1660-2 with the intention of comparing them with those of the 1570s, in particular the Admonition Controversy.²¹ In the 1570s disagreement was at times intense, certainly among clerics and intellectuals, yet whilst there are identifiable exceptions, it is apparent, as both Barry Coward and Kenneth Fincham make clear, that there was no widespread move towards separation.²² The overwhelming incentive was for the inflexible maintenance of one national Church and evidence of Separatism, the establishment of independent congregations outside the national Church, is not widespread before 1640. Indeed, in the decades that immediately followed the Controversy there appears to have emerged a doctrinal consensus, and a commitment to unity, despite differences of view regarding Church governance. How different was the outcome in the seventeenth century. In just a few months in the early 1660s, huge attempts by the restored king, the court and the protagonists themselves failed to find a settlement. As a result, large numbers of able clergy found themselves deprived of their livings and the parochial opportunities they afforded for ministry and evangelism.

What then were the essential differences between our periods? What was the prime cause of the split; was the 'ejection' of 1662 just the final bursting of the bubble? Had there been such a quantum change in belief or circumstance that unity became impossible, or is the explanation rather that, over time, the 'logical progression of rejection and withdrawal ... reached its logical conclusion in separation'?²³ The procedure that has been followed in addressing these questions is to explore evidence of the divergent beliefs and practices to be found in the writings and actions of representative Conformist and Nonconformist scholars and theologians in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. By identifying the nature of their respective theologies, their willingness to engage in polemical controversy on religious topics, their attitude towards the toleration of contrary religious beliefs and the nature of their individual spirituality, we shall be in a position to identify the essential causes of division in the early modern English Church, and arrive at meaningful observations and conclusions.

²¹ Below, pp.196-212

²² Coward, *Stuart Age*, p.82 and Fincham, 'Introduction', pp.3-4

²³ Lake, *Moderate Puritans*, p.1

In the analysis of those issues which were considered to be so crucial to thinkers on both sides of the divide, it is apparent that ecclesiological concerns were undoubtedly prominent, convictions relating to acceptable forms of Church government, worship, liturgy, and that which constitutes a valid ministry were frequently expressed as the reason for the separation. But, I shall argue that these principles were not the prime cause of dissention. Division was formulated on a foundation of theological belief which gave it voice, and it was those convictions that empowered the fragmentation. My purpose is to show that, in the mid-seventeenth century, godly men on both sides of the divide were motivated by divergent doctrinal persuasions that were driving their consciences, even though, on the essentials of religious experience and in the nature of their spirituality, it would be difficult to separate them. The irony is that in the Elizabethan Church, we find that parallel persuasions held by clergy on both sides, principles which were subjected to comparable pressures, did not result in division. There we shall find that pastoral concerns for the unity of the Church and the spiritual welfare of its adherents were given priority over dogma.

The principal impetus in this thesis is to explore the religious diversity that was taking place in the early modern English Church. This is not to deny that there were both political and cultural stimuli at work. In this period such influences were unavoidable, and this will be apparent as my arguments progress: religious convictions were not held in a vacuum. But these are not my primary interest here: my intention is to emphasize what was going on in the hearts and minds of Christian believers that resulted in division, especially in the 1660s. In the pursuit of my objective I have taken the unusual course of first examining religious diversity in the seventeenth century, the intention being to define the nature of division when it actually took place, and then to revert to the previous century in a comparative review in order to explain why, in my view, separation was then avoided: was that fortuitous or deliberate, was it the inevitable consequence of events, or the effect of conscious decisions?

In Chapter 1 I present to the reader an overview of religious controversy following the Reformation, taking space to define our principal terms and reviewing the insights and analyses already accessible from historians to our subject. Chapter 2 will be given to an analysis of developments, both ecclesiastical and doctrinal, in the seventeenth-century English Church before examining, in Chapter 3, the contribution of academic theologians to the study of religion and dogma in the period. Then, in Chapters 4 and 5 we shall explore in detail the involvement of a number of prominent Conformists and Puritans in

religious debate in the years leading up to the great divide of the 1660s. In Chapter 6 we shall revert to the sixteenth century, taking a contrasting view of religious contention in Elizabeth's reign, as evidenced in the Admonition Controversy, before investigating, in Chapter 7, the nature of three specific contests between Puritans and Conformists in that period. In chapter 8 we shall examine the power of institutional legislation over the religious life of the nation before, in the last Chapter, offering some conclusions and relevant observations in the light of the evidence that has been presented.

Objectivity is invariably the historian's intention, but it is not readily achieved, indeed it might be argued that it is impossible. Against such a reservation, the historian would insist that the whole point of the historical method is to minimise the subjective collection and analysis of data. Neither perception should permit us to be drawn into what Rowan Williams describes as

fashionable doubts about 'objective' history or the sort of ultra-scepticism about the historian's bias which makes it impossible to trust any narrative. It isn't that narratives are false or wrong, simply that it helps to know some of the questions they think they are answering.²⁴

For this reason, it is considered necessary, before we proceed, for the present writer to acknowledge the 'point of view' that shapes his engagement with the questions to be addressed, and my response to this obligation is to recognise that the thesis will, at times, reflect the sympathies and preconceptions of an English Protestant evangelical Christian, one who yet remains consciously and deliberately open to the visions of other Christian traditions. In particular the writer seeks to apply his conclusions to his own tradition within the universal Church, as will be apparent in the final chapter.

Let us commence, then, by taking a preliminary look at the nature of the divisive issues apparent in the early modern English Christendom.

²⁴ Williams, *Why Study the Past*, p.5

Chapter 1

Religious Controversy and the Early Modern English Church

Controversy and conflict are the very stuff of church history, ... if the church were suddenly to be at peace, there would be nothing [for the ecclesiastical historian] to record.

Socrates of Constantinople²⁵

Christians wouldn't disagree so nastily if they could only rid themselves of the mistaken conviction that they shouldn't disagree at all.

Chris Hardwick²⁶

Religious controversy is nothing new. Issues of faith are rarely as clear-cut as we like to think and conflicting beliefs are often tenaciously if not dogmatically maintained. Religion in England towards the end of the sixteenth century, and on into the seventeenth, was no exception; in both centuries Christian standards were being forged in a crucible of powerful debate. As Dewey F. Wallace argues, 'the theological literature of the Protestant Reformation and its seventeenth-century aftermath ... was shaped by controversy'. And further, as Isabel Rivers maintains,

one danger of controversial literature ... is that controversialists tend to simplify their opponent's views; such accounts should not be accepted at face value unless corroborated by the statements of those under attack. The rhetoric of controversy sometimes has the effect of pushing apart positions which are closer than they appear to be.²⁷

The strength of her argument becomes manifest in the polemic of early modern English religious literature in which, not only had doctrinal differences with Rome to be defended, but the 'boundaries drawn among Protestant factions' had to be contended for, to which had to be added the need to defend Christian truths 'against gainsayers'.²⁸ Nor were these disputes always harmonious. John Owen (1616-1683) — whose work we shall be examining in Chapter 5 — felt bound to complain of one of his adversaries, John Goodwin (1594-1665), insisting that his 'many ... Polemical Treatises ... [were] sprinkled with Satirical Sarcasmes, and contemptuous rebukes.' Yet Owen himself, in the same treatise, was not slow to apply his own sardonic polemic against both Goodwin and another adversary, Henry Hammond (1605-1660).²⁹ John Coffey observes that, even worse, 'preachers and pamphleteers could throw restraint to the wind and pour vitriol on their

²⁵ Socrates of Constantinople, *Ecclesiastical History* (c.439)

²⁶ Chris Hardwick, *The Guardian*, June 21, 2008

²⁷ Rivers, *Reason*, p.7

²⁸ Wallace, 'Polemical divinity', p.206

²⁹ Owen, *Saints Perseverance*, Epistle Dedicatory

opponents. ... this heated rhetoric aroused passions which could erupt into physical violence'.³⁰

The reforming process that took place in the one hundred or so years following the sixteenth-century Reformation in the English Church saw an immense transformation in its life and doctrine, changes which were formed in an atmosphere electrified by aspirations, not only for doctrinal reform, but also for new ecclesiastical structures and liturgical settings, all arising in a context of resistant traditions. Such transformations did not come easily and they frequently proved divisive. There were those in the Church, a not insignificant minority, for whom a radical reform of the Church in England was considered crucial if it was to be true to its calling, whilst firm resistance consistently confronted such objectives, an opposition originating from those who took the view that the Reformation, which they undoubtedly endorsed, had gone far enough. The resultant disagreements evolved and intensified well into the following century and through the Civil Wars.

That those wars proved to be the most significant of events in the seventeenth century it would be hard to deny. The contention is made by some historians, including Nicholas Tyacke and John Morrill, that religious controversy was a major causative factor of seventeenth-century English civil strife. Morrill maintains that what made those wars possible at all was a crisis over religion.³¹ His assertion is that those that took up the 'force of arms to make [things] happen' had 'a [religious] fire in their belly'.³² In a celebrated comment he argued that 'the English civil war was not the first European revolution: it was the last of the Wars of Religion'.³³ This he has since acknowledged to be a 'throwaway line at the end of a paper', a comment which he seeks to qualify and review twenty five years later in 'Renaming England's Wars of Religion' (2011), an article written at the conclusion of a book in which the concept is exposed to scholarly examination.³⁴ In his contribution to the debate Tyacke contends that 'religion was a major contributory cause of the Civil War', primarily due 'to the rise to power of Arminianism in the 1620s'. This is a view we shall be examining,³⁵ but Tyacke is careful 'not to belittle the importance of other issues'.³⁶

This, and associated interpretations, we shall be exploring, but, by the time of the Restoration in 1660, the on-going disputes within the Church, fuelled by the events of the previous twenty years, were to culminate in differences so profound that division and

³⁰ Coffey, *Persecution and Toleration*, p.13

³¹ Morrill, 'Attack', p.105, Morrill, 'Context', p.157, and Tyacke, 'Puritanism', pp.119-122

³² Morrill, 'Impact', p.51

³³ Morrill, 'Context', p.178

³⁴ Morrill, 'Renaming', pp.307 in Prior and Burgess, *Revisited*, pp.307-325

³⁵ See below, pp.74-79

³⁶ Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*, p.245, Tyacke, 'Puritanism', p.119

separation became unavoidable for a considerable proportion of those in ministry, resulting in approaching two thousand incumbents leaving the service of the English national Church, either over issues of title in 1660 or, for the majority, over a failure to conform in 1662. The reasons for this separation it is my intention to analyse, and in the pursuit of this objective I shall be exploring the work of a number English Church divines from both centuries. But first we must define the principal terms we propose to use in this context, and then to review the contributions, already before us, from both historians and theologians to our subject.

a. Definition of terms

Those studying religious diversity affecting the life of the English Established Church in the latter half of the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries are directly confronted by the ideological contests that ranged between two identifiable groups within the Church. These are often classified as the ‘Anglicans’ and the ‘Puritans’ but, as most historians acknowledge, there are problems associated with both labels. ‘Puritan’, an expression widely acknowledged to be difficult to define, was first coined as a term of abuse, ‘a sobriquet used by the ungodly of the godly’.³⁷ John Field (1544/5?-1588) and Thomas Wilcox (1549-1608), in their confrontational *Admonition to the Parliament*,³⁸ were complaining of its use as a derisory term of abuse by 1572, and J.I. Packer has it that our present day use of the word in no way corresponds with its use at the time of its original application.³⁹ During that period the word was used as ‘an insult, implying one or both of two evils, that of “pure-church” elitism and priggish censoriousness’.⁴⁰

For the years preceding the Restoration, the use of the term ‘Anglican’ also remains problematic. It is clearly anachronistic for, as Fincham argues, ‘bar a few separatists, all English Protestants were “Anglican” before 1642’.⁴¹ The seventeenth-century historian D. Calderwood suggests that the term was used by James I when comparing the ‘Anglican’ bishops with the ‘Papisticall’,⁴² but Patrick Collinson considers that the word is ‘perhaps justified’ only for such men as Lancelot Andrewes (1555-1626), John Donne (1572-1631) and perhaps George Herbert (1593-1633),⁴³ whilst Diarmaid MacCulloch suggests that, for

³⁷ N.H. Keeble in Baxter, *Autobiography*, p.xxv

³⁸ Field and Wilcox, *Admonition*, Preface, ‘To the Godly readers’. See below, pp.199-200

³⁹ For Packer, this is defined as 1564-1642.

⁴⁰ Packer, *Quest*, p.50

⁴¹ Fincham, ‘Introduction’, pp.3-4

⁴² Calderwood, *Kirk of Scotland*, V, p.694

⁴³ Collinson, *Puritan Character*, p.16

these latter divines, a better expression would be 'sacramentalist'.⁴⁴ John Spurr maintains that it was not until the Restoration that a self-conscious 'Anglicanism' emerged from the debates over schism.⁴⁵

Certainly the word was unknown in the sixteenth century, barely known in the seventeenth and now, in everyday usage, it has retained resonances with the nineteenth-century term, 'High Church', synonymous even with 'Anglo-Catholic'.⁴⁶ As a result, problems arise because the sense in which both words are understood today is inappropriate to the period of this study. Nonetheless, in the past they were widely used in relation to the early modern Church, with J. Sears McGee claiming that, in spite of their limitations, these terms 'are the best we have'.⁴⁷

For this thesis the word 'Puritan' will be retained, and the term 'Conformist' is preferred to 'Anglican'. The occasional use of the term, 'Episcopalian' will also be considered where the issues under consideration are confined to views on the episcopacy. The expression, 'Anglican', will be used when it is relied upon by other contributors to our subject, at least until reference is made to the middle of the seventeenth century: the intention is that Spurr's analysis is the one we shall employ in our use of that term.

What do we understand, then, by the expression, 'Conformist', and to what were the Conformists conforming? Essentially, 'Conformity' in this study refers to one who adheres to, and willingly submits to, the English national Church as established by law. This would mean, in the context of the first half of the seventeenth century, the majority of the clergy, men associated with the establishment, and supporters of the 1559 Elizabethan Church Settlement. Protestants they undoubtedly were, and supporters of the royal supremacy in the episcopal Established Church. They remained wedded to Scripture as the rule of faith, and, with some exceptions, were moderate in tone, with the majority adhering to ideological mainstream Elizabethan Calvinism⁴⁸ in their theological allegiance. As such they are defined by R.T Kendall as advocates of 'credal predestinarianism'; they rejected the 'experimental' version pursued by Puritans such as William Perkins (1558-1602) as divisive and subversive, tending towards Separatism.⁴⁹

Towards the end of the sixteenth century there arose, among Conformists, an increasing unease with, even opposition to, strict Calvinist dogma, giving rise to an Arminianism *avant*

⁴⁴ MacCulloch, *Christianity*, p.649

⁴⁵ Spurr, 'Schism', p.410

⁴⁶ Nockles, *Oxford Movement*, pp.40-41

⁴⁷ McGee, *Godly Man*, pp.x, 1-3, and 10

⁴⁸ See, Gilliam and Tighe, 'Ambiguity', *passim*

⁴⁹ Kendall, *Calvin*, pp.79-80. See also Lake, 'Calvinism', pp.39-41

la lettre involving Cambridge divines such as Peter Baro (1534-1599) and William Barrett (*b. c.*1561, *d.* in or after 1630).⁵⁰ Conformists remained persistently Episcopalian, insisting on adherence to established liturgy and ceremony, firmly opposed to any destabilising of the *status quo* by way of further reform of Church structures and worship. They considered that the Church of England was sufficiently reformed and a constituent, though not identical, partner in the Reformed family of Churches in Europe.⁵¹

Even this term has its problems. Fincham does well to remind us that — as we find replicated among historians today — there were contrasting readings of ‘Conformity’ in the seventeenth century, with Archbishop George Abbot (1562-1633) advising Charles I in 1633 that there were no ‘inconformable ministers’ in the Church of England at the very time that William Laud (1573-1644/5), whilst still Bishop of London, was ‘busily ferreting out Nonconformists in the diocese of London’. Further, Conformity varied both in degree and in its tolerance or intolerance of other forms of commitment to the Church of England. In practice Conformity differed within various decentralised jurisdictions in the two provinces, devolving into diversity in the dioceses and parishes, nor was Conformity consistently enforced.⁵²

After the Restoration, Conformity took on a different hue, and can more readily be equated with ‘Anglican Uniformity’, which is defined by R.A. Beddard as

conformity to the doctrine and worship of the church [which had become] ... a ready means of identifying those who accepted the traditional order in government and society ... By 1660 the Church of England had taken on its celebrated role as the vehicle for social and political conservatism in the life of the nation.⁵³

All of which means that any generalisation about clerical Conformity has to be treated with caution.

No less difficult to define is its converse, ‘Nonconformity’. Given our initial definition of Conformist the Nonconformists could, at first sight, be demarcated as those who reject, or unwillingly submit to, the English national Church as established by law. But — apart from those recusants who also refused to conform — they, like the Conformists, were committed Protestants. They also frequently declared their support for the monarchy and, again like their Conformist opponents, they were strictly wedded to Scripture as their rule

⁵⁰ See below, p.212

⁵¹ Marshall, *Reformation*, p.114

⁵² Fincham, ‘Clerical Conformity’, pp.125-127. Fincham cites Laud, *Works*, V, pp.310 and 318, T. Webster, *Godly Clergy*, ch.9, and Guildhall Library, London, MS 9657/1 nos. 5, 6 and 12. In his article Fincham explores contrasting readings of Conformity and the ‘complex character of its enforcement’ from Whitgift through to Laud.

⁵³ Beddard, ‘Restoration Church’, p.157

of faith. But they were not always moderate in their involvement in debate and, certainly in the seventeenth-century context, whilst the majority were also Calvinists they were divided about whether to remain loyal to the established Church. In varying degrees of resistance, they refused to conform — or resisted — ceremonies and liturgies demanded by the prayer book and argued for the abolition of the episcopate or, at least, a reduction in its powers.

Therefore we find that, whilst Nonconformists might be called ‘Puritan’, not all Puritans were necessarily separating Nonconformists. This fact and the multiplicity of definitions of the Puritan from both historians and theologians give evidence of the complexity we experience in our attempts at delineation of that term. For historians such as Christopher Hill and J.F.H. New, writing in the 1950s and 1960s,⁵⁴ the expressions ‘Puritan’ and ‘Anglican’ conjure up an image of division, a widening rift; the Puritans were against the Anglicans, the Conformists, and this is the sense in which many still understand their relative stances. The Puritans in this view are depicted as opposed to the Conformist standpoint, whilst remaining committed to a single national Church; in Tom Webster’s terminology, ‘adding to but not subverting the status quo’.⁵⁵ They considered the Church only half reformed — ‘the Elizabethan Settlement was an opening gambit, not a done deal’⁵⁶ — so they pressed for further restructuring of its order and worship, this to match their understanding of what a true and godly Church should be, a Church structure which required specific biblical sanction in each detail, for them the essential test. As Henry McAdoo has it, the driving theological imperative for the Puritan

is that of attempting the justification from Scripture of a system in all its details. Instead of the teaching of the Articles concerning the sufficiency of Scripture in fundamentals, there grew up a doctrine which required this authority for non-essentials.⁵⁷

John Calvin’s Genevan model was the ‘Presbyterian’ ideal for which many of them aspired, whilst against them men like John Whitgift (1530/1?-1604), Archbishop of Canterbury (1583-1604) and theologian Richard Hooker (1554-1600), also asserting a reliance on scriptural validation of their views, maintained that no form of Church structure is specifically and exclusively prescribed in the Bible and that scriptural authentication is not vital for things indifferent, the *adiaphora*. There is some support for their position from Calvin (1509-1564). Thomas W. Street claims that he allowed a wide range for *adiaphora*. The criteria for what can be called ‘indifferent’ are provided in the Bible in a scheme in which he placed emphasis on the general principles given by Scripture rather than on literal

⁵⁴ Hill, *Society and Puritanism*, pp.1-15, and New, *Anglican and Puritan*, p.1

⁵⁵ Webster, ‘Puritanism’, p.53

⁵⁶ Craig, ‘Growth of Puritanism’, pp.34-35

⁵⁷ McAdoo, *Spirit of Anglicanism*, p.4

interpretation. In Street's view, Calvin's position on *adiaphora* reveals him to be an advocate of Christian liberty.⁵⁸ W. David Neelands agrees with this analysis: 'Calvin argues "indifference" in order either to allow Christian liberty or to avoid certain practices, lest consciences ensnare themselves'. But, argues Neelands, this view is opposite to that conceived by Hooker, who 'uses the notion ... so that the church can require them [the *adiaphora*] freely. ... matters indifferent may be regulated by the church ... with no emphasis on the question of consciences'.⁵⁹ There is also some doubt whether the Puritan pressure for a Presbyterian Church polity in England received any support from Calvin, or even from Calvin's successor at Geneva, Theodore Beza (1519-1605). John T. McNeill, in his review of the history of Calvinism, maintains that, on questions of worship and polity, there is no evidence that either of them gave backing to the English Presbyterians in their attempts at reform. Calvin was respectful in addressing the Archbishops of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer, (incumbent, 1533-1556) and Matthew Parker, (incumbent, 1559-1575), whilst Beza is said to have corresponded fraternally with Parker, Edmund Grindal (incumbent, 1575-1583), and Whitgift. McNeill cites a letter from Beza to Whitgift of March 1591, in which Beza is said to have asserted, 'I never had the intention of opposing the ecclesiastical polity of your Anglican [English] Church. I wish and hope that ... your bishops may continue and maintain forever the right and title to the government of the Church'.⁶⁰ Unfortunately, McNeill fails to give a reference for his source.

Williams argues that for Hooker, the Church's episcopalian structure is seen as 'the way the Christian community', guided by God, 'agrees to concentrate its authority'.⁶¹ Hooker himself put it to his Puritan opponents even more succinctly:

A verie strange thing sure it were that such a discipline as ye speake of should be taught by Christ and his apostles in the word of God, and no church ever found it out, nor receyved it till this present time.⁶²

The twentieth of the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion states that 'it is not lawful for the church to ordain anything that is contrary to God's Word written'. The Puritans considered this to be 'inadequate and misleading, if not formally erroneous'.⁶³ Scripture alone is the all-sufficient and necessary standard for the Church and its worship; for them, specific biblical sanction is required in every aspect.

⁵⁸ Anon., 'Review', pp.70-71

⁵⁹ Neelands, 'Scripture', p.92

⁶⁰ McNeill, *Calvinism*, p.315. This appears to be a very early usage of the term 'Anglican'. Conceivably, introduced by the translator.

⁶¹ Williams, 'Hooker', p.151

⁶² Hooker, *Works*, I, Preface, p.21

⁶³ Ratcliff, 'Savoy Conference' pp.94-95

We shall be examining the extent of this perceived division between the Puritan and the Conformist, but Puritanism was not necessarily set entirely in opposition to the established position. The two sides were far from wholly in contention and, particularly from among moderate Puritans, much was held in common, which we shall discover when we review the controversial debates in the late fifteen hundreds. Puritanism manifested itself in various guises, from moderate tendencies towards Nonconformity to more militant expressions pressing for positive reforms, but, as Peter Lake has argued, even in its most overt gestures of refusal and rejection, Puritans found over-riding reasons for wishing to maintain their stance within the national Church, as we shall discover when examining the involvement of Perkins and William Bradshaw (1571-1618).⁶⁴

Tyacke is a historian who convincingly argues that the majority of clergy and many educated laymen, both Conformist and Puritan, were Calvinists at the end of the sixteenth century. On that understanding, what would be the identifying distinctions then, within this consensus, by which we might categorize the Puritan if it is not by his adherence to Genevan Reformed dogma? Does the Puritan clergyman demonstrate a distinctive doctrinal approach that sets him apart from his Conformist Calvinist brethren, or should we just categorise him by his attitude to Church polity and liturgy? The latter is Tyacke's approach; he claims that, in view of the unified Calvinist views held by all the clergy, Puritans should not be identified by their doctrinal stance at all. He would delineate them as those who refused to conform to, or who had reservations regarding, certain rites and ceremonies, with the most strident pressing for a Presbyterian form of Church government⁶⁵ as against Episcopalian.⁶⁶ By this definition, he would appear to exclude the Independents, Separatists, and Perkins. Not all historians would agree, and the task is rendered the more complex by the suggestion of Peter White that there is a 'spectrum' here. Further, he argues, 'most churchmen acknowledged that these were abstruse questions not fit for public debate'.⁶⁷ If this should be the case, how much will these considerations cloud the issue?

Russell supports Tyacke's interpretation, but he defines the Puritan in pietistic terms, as a godly element held within the Calvinist consensus, a group without political significance.⁶⁸ In support of this assertion, Russell claims that, in the late Jacobean House of Commons, there was no Puritan representation at all and Parliament contained no avowed opponents

⁶⁴ Lake, *Moderate Puritans*, pp.1-4, and below, pp.275-277, and 281-282

⁶⁵ For a definition of Presbyterianism, see Lake, *Anglicans and Puritans?*, pp.1-2

⁶⁶ Tyacke, *Aspects*, pp.133-134

⁶⁷ White, 'Rise of Arminianism', p.54

⁶⁸ Russell, *Parliaments*, pp.26-32

of either episcopacy or the Prayer Book. This remained the case until 1629 when ‘the rise of Arminianism was beginning to produce a religious polarisation of a sort which had been unknown since the 1580s’.⁶⁹ Collinson’s view, expressed in *Puritan Movement*, is that the conflict between the Puritan and the ‘Anglican’ was a matter ‘of degree, of theological temperature ... rather than fundamental principle’ whilst Coward highlights the distinctive Puritan lifestyle ‘in which predestinarian theology, Bible reading, sermons, preaching and anti-Catholicism were much more evident’ than in the lives of the majority of Protestants. ‘Godly men and women spent their days (and nights) at a high level of spiritual intensity’, and he maintains that ‘every aspect of the lives of the godly was dominated by the predestinarian creed’.⁷⁰ This latter assertion is open to question, as I shall argue, given that the same religious intensity is to be found in the lives of Puritans, such as John Goodwin (1594-1665), who entertained Arminian beliefs on the doctrines of grace.⁷¹ Historians such as Spurr and Coffey question the very assumption that all Puritans were Calvinists, particularly in the seventeenth century. Spurr identifies Milton, John Goodwin, and a ‘whole branch of the Baptist movement, the “General Baptists”, who were Arminian’ and yet, in Spurr’s view, they were ‘undoubtedly puritan ... [though] their stance was perhaps more evangelical than orthodox Calvinists’.⁷² However, this is not exactly a large sample, and it has to be open to question whether Milton and the General Baptists can positively be described as Puritan.

However defined, all Puritans maintained a high level of spiritual intensity, an overarching concern for a reformation of ‘manners’, an inner reformation that sought to eliminate sin from the believer’s life, and indeed from the lives of everyone in society. The concerns that motivated this intensity were issues closely related to their anxiety over their soul’s condition before God: Calvinism was not the major motivating force. The more we consult the historiographical explanations the more we are forced to the conclusion that White has a point: there was in the Church a range of opinions without easily defined parameters, and we shall discover, as we progress, that definitions offered by theologians can be rather different, in their perceived criteria, from those which are offered by historians.

Adding a further analysis to the varied definitions of the term ‘Puritan’, this from a theological standpoint, Kendall emphasizes the aversion of sixteenth and seventeenth-

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.28-29

⁷⁰ Coward, *Stuart Age*, p.83, citing Collinson, *Puritan Movement*, pp.26-27

⁷¹ See below, pp.177-178. Not to be confused with John Owen’s close associate, Thomas Goodwin, a strong Calvinist.

⁷² Spurr, *Puritanism*, p.168

century divines to the label. The motivation for further reform of the structures of the Church doesn't adequately define a Puritan stance, he suggests. He gives the example of Perkins, who rejected the term as 'vile', and, Kendall notes, Perkins 'never published a word calling for modifications in Church government nor does he suggest any kind of Church government at all'.⁷³ It is Kendall's view that recent studies have been dominated by historical, literary and sociological interests, and that the theologians have been left behind. This he attempts to rectify by highlighting the theological thrust of Puritanism, maintaining that the 'fundamental concern of these divines is the knowledge of saving faith ... heightened by the fact that their soteriology is thoroughly predestinarian'.⁷⁴ For the purpose of his book, Kendall rejects the use of the term 'Puritan', electing to describe Perkins and those who followed him as 'experimental predestinarians'.⁷⁵

An important definition of Puritanism, also from the work of a theologian, is provided by J.I. Packer, and this we shall be acknowledging when we come to compare the definitions of historians and theologians, this in our examination of the theological perspective on our subject.⁷⁶ What is clear is that a precise definition remains difficult to achieve, although the literary historian, N.H. Keeble argues that whilst this might be the case, 'there is not ... much difficulty in recognising the puritan spirit. ... Its various strategies ... shared a desire to recover ... purity of doctrine, the simplicity of worship, the commitment of ministry, and the integrity of faith' of the early Church.⁷⁷

Meanwhile, it must be relevant to our purpose to examine evidence of contemporary opinion. Archbishop Abbot held the view that 'such as you call puritans did never differ from the rest in any part of substance but about circumstances and ceremonies, and about the manner of Ecclesiastical regiment',⁷⁸ but that analysis was, and is, treated with reservation by many, both in his own life time and now. One example of a definition of those 'called by the odious and vile name of Puritan', from the pen of a contemporary writer, is straightforward enough. Bradshaw was a moderate Puritan who exercised a form of semi-Separatism in the early Jacobean period, advocating separate gathered congregations of visible saints whilst recognising the parish churches as essentially part of the true Church.⁷⁹ He asserted that, for the Puritan, only those actions and rituals specifically authorised by the Word of God are permissible in the worship of God. All

⁷³ Kendall, *Calvin*, p.5. For Perkins, see below, pp.246-251, and 258-259

⁷⁴ Kendall, *Calvin*, pp.5-6

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p.8. See, Select Glossary

⁷⁶ Below, p.100

⁷⁷ Keeble, 'Milton', p.125

⁷⁸ Abbot, *Reasons*, p.101, cited by Welsby, *Abbot*, p.25

⁷⁹ Bradshaw, *Puritanisme*, Preface, and Spurr, *Puritanism*, p.63

others are idolatry and superstition. Concerning the Church, every congregation is a true visible Church having the right to appoint its own spiritual officers. Pastors, teachers (doctors) and elders, who may exercise oversight only in their own congregation, are the highest spiritual officers; there is no superior pastor, only Jesus Christ. No minister should be a sole ruler in a Church; this is to be jointly shared with lay ruling elders. It is the responsibility of those who hold the spiritual 'keys' in the Church to exercise discreet (not inquisitorial) censures against 'evident and apparent' scandal. The civil magistrate has supreme power over all churches within his domain, but he himself has to be subject to discipline in his own congregation. No ecclesiastical officer is exempt from subjection to the 'meanest civil officer' and is punishable by them for transgressions both civil and ecclesiastical.⁸⁰ That is the definition of specifically Puritan belief and practice made by a Puritan in 1605, and it gives every appearance of endorsing the interpretation offered by Tyacke. Bradshaw, whilst rejecting pressures to separate, was one of the most vocal of the Puritans advocating the Millenary Petition (1603) and his are the views of a Presbyterian. Independents would have found the definition unacceptable. The magistrate, whilst holding responsibility for protecting the godly, has 'no power to impose, punish or coerce in matters of religion'.⁸¹ The Puritan Richard Baxter (1615-1691) also had reservations about the involvement of the laity in the rule of the local Church. From the Conformist standpoint, Bradshaw's work was countered by Oliver Ormerod (*d.* 1626) of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, who classified the Puritan in negative terms as the man that rejects the Elizabethan Church Settlement and who, by their private conferences, by their books and their pamphlets, and

by all other meanes, that possiblief they could devise [works], to deprave her proceedings, and to defame that most auncient kinde of commendable church-government, which through Gods great mercie and Godly lawes of her Highnes, was according to his holy word established amongst us.⁸²

The authors of the *Admonition to the Parliament* summarise their Puritan view of the Church in the following terms:

The outward marks, whereby a true Christian church is known, are preaching of the word purely, ministering of the sacraments sincerely, and ecclesiastical discipline, which consisteth in admonition and correction of faults severely.⁸³

⁸⁰ Bradshaw, *Puritanisme*, pp.1-20

⁸¹ Coffey, *Goodwin*, p.116

⁸² Ormerod, *Picture*, Preface, A3v

⁸³ Field and Wilcox, *Admonition*, p.9

All these sources, both sympathetic and adversarial, centre on Puritan views about the Church and its forms of ministry. Time and further research will tell whether these views are typical of opinion at the time. One historian who thinks otherwise is Spurr.

Given the evident difficulties of classification, Spurr offers a unique contribution. Showing considerable detachment, he offers insights into the lives of the Puritans, particularly those living in the seventeenth century, in a work which largely avoids, probably deliberately, the views of other historians.⁸⁴ Spurr concentrates on contemporary sources in an attempt to locate ‘a definition of Puritanism as that which Puritans saw in each other’. His search leads him to conclude that the term ‘denotes a cluster of ideas, attitudes and habits, all built upon the experience of justification, election and regeneration’, and it is this that ‘differentiates puritans from other groups’.⁸⁵ This conclusion is of interest in that it differs in some measure from the examples cited above, and of particular significance is Spurr’s emphasis on ‘experience’. The Puritan’s religion had a theological foundation, but the edifice itself comprised both ‘head and heart. The whole of their religion was predicated upon a spiritual experience, an emotional response to God’. Indeed, for Puritans, such as John Bunyan (1628-1688), the seat of faith is not so much the head but the heart. It was a felt religion.⁸⁶ There is much to be said for Spurr’s approach here, and we shall return to his perceptions when dealing with the mid-seventeenth century and the Restoration period.

Turning now to the terms ‘Arminian’ and ‘Calvinist’, what do historians and theologians mean by these expressions when they use them in the context of the early modern Church — the Christian community — in England? Tyacke advises caution, for ‘the whole topic of Calvinism and Arminianism has ... become bedevilled by disagreements over terminology’.⁸⁷ As we shall see, he has made an enormous contribution to this subject, but, as Lake asks when commenting on his work, ‘were the opinions [Tyacke] was calling Calvinism really derived from Calvin and his immediate followers? Were indeed the tenets he was calling Arminianism derived from Arminius? If they were not [does this] render his usage of them invalid?’⁸⁸

Early in the seventeenth century, the Dutch Reformed theologian Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609) had set forth

⁸⁴ In Spurr, *Puritanism*, the author summarises the views of other historians in a single paragraph and has only one passing reference to Tyacke: Spurr, *Puritanism*, pp.3, and 93

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.7-8

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.5-6

⁸⁷ Tyacke, *Aspects*, p.3

⁸⁸ Lake, ‘Introduction’, p.14

a belief in God's universal grace and the freewill of all men to obtain salvation ... [He] rejected the teaching of Calvinism that the world was divided between elect and reprobate whom God had arbitrarily predestinated, the one to Heaven and the other to Hell.⁸⁹

Arminius denied total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, and the final perseverance of the saints, all said to be principal tenets of Calvinism. The Arminian doctrine of predestination maintains that God has predetermined that all who believe in Christ, through faith, will be justified, whilst our ultimate eternal security is conditional. Arminius died in 1609, but a year later forty-five Dutch ministers signed the Remonstrance, which is a document endorsing Arminius's soteriology.⁹⁰

To what extent can we justifiably equate English 'Arminianism', as it manifested itself in the seventeenth-century English Church, with the theology of Arminius? Arminius certainly maintained that Christ died for all, that the offer of grace in salvation is offered to all, and that our wills are given the capacity to choose or reject that offer. But Arminius was a theologian of the Dutch Reformed Church and it is stretching the imagination to suggest that he would have endorsed many of the views of Archbishop Laud, for example, about Church governance, his insistence on ritualised reverence, order and obedience to rules requiring an 'altar', kneeling for Communion, genuflection, vestments, and set liturgical prayers. It could well be that Laud, accused as he was of being an Arminian, was indeed an Arminian of an English variety, a man who entertained reservations regarding strict predestination doctrine, but Arminius would have had little sympathy with many of Laud's views and his counter-reforming activities. Given that Laud denied that he was an Arminian, English Arminianism of the Laudian variety, if only to avoid confusion, might be better defined as a form of 'anti-Calvinism'. Having a soteriology established on a foundation of ceremony and sacrament, its roots were to be found in Conformist traditions based on the Church by law established and the 1559 Elizabethan Church settlement, remaining in sympathy with the symbolism, ceremony, and choral music to be found in Elizabeth's Chapel Royal, Westminster Abbey and the Cathedrals.⁹¹

Equally crucial is our understanding of what is meant by the term 'Calvinism'. Contributions by some historians appear dominated by the doctrines of predestination, election and reprobation, and among these I would include Tyacke. Calvinism is regularly summarised in the five doctrines of grace: total depravity, unconditional election, limited

⁸⁹ Tyacke, *Aspects*, p.132

⁹⁰ A useful summary of Arminius's doctrine of faith and a comparison with Reformed theology can be found in Kendall, *Calvin*, pp.141-150

⁹¹ MacCulloch, 'Latitude', p.47

atonement, irresistible grace and final perseverance.⁹² These doctrines are far from being the sum of Calvinist theology and they were not new to Christian thought in the sixteenth century. The doctrines are Augustinian and, some would argue, Pauline. Unconditional election certainly forms part of Calvin's systematic theology, but only a relatively minor part. As B.A. Gerrish argues:

the *Institutes* was [Calvin's] construction of a comprehensive interpretation of the Christian faith ... Unfortunately, his achievement has been overshadowed by ... an obsessive preoccupation with a few issues — or even just one issue — torn from the total fabric of his thought ... He had little if anything new to say on the Christian doctrine of election or predestination [and] ... it is a serious failure of understanding when Calvin's treatment of election, which he placed at the end of the third book of the *Institutes*, is discussed with little regard for anything he has said before.⁹³

The theologian William C. Placher agrees:

Most people think of the doctrine of predestination as occupying a far more important place in Calvin's thought than it actually did. He dealt with predestination late in the *Institutes* and not at all in one of his catechisms, and this certainly was not the starting point of his theology.⁹⁴

Karl Barth concurs, with his assertion that, whilst predestination cannot be separated from Reformed Church doctrine, this particular view of God is in the background; it is not *the* Calvinist doctrine in the same sense that justification by faith is *the* Lutheran doctrine.⁹⁵ Alan C. Clifford argues that, in the *Institutes*, predestination is seen by Calvin as 'an *ex post facto* explanation of why some are not saved'.⁹⁶ It cannot be firmly asserted that Calvin himself adhered to all of classic Calvinism's five doctrines of grace anyway. There are strong arguments from several modern scholars to support the view that it is Beza who is responsible for the development of 'five point' Calvinism, particularly in relation to his views on the atonement.⁹⁷ Kendall maintains that fundamental to Calvin's doctrine of faith 'is his belief that Christ died indiscriminately for all'; Calvin did not teach a doctrine of limited atonement, whereas it is fundamental to Beza's doctrine of faith, Kendall maintains, 'that Christ died for the elect only'.⁹⁸ Carl Bangs asserts that 'it is characteristic of Beza to take a position of Calvin's, fasten on a difficult facet of it, and throw it into stark, isolated prominence where it can be only accepted or rejected, but not softened'.⁹⁹ Calvin's own

⁹² See, Select Glossary

⁹³ Gerrish 'Calvin', p.77

⁹⁴ Placher, *Christian Theology*, p.221

⁹⁵ Barth, *Theology*, pp.84-85

⁹⁶ Clifford, *Atonement*, p.70

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.12-13, Toon, *Hyper-Calvinism*, pp.13-16 and Kendall, *Calvin*, pp.29-30

⁹⁸ Kendall, *Calvin*, p.13

⁹⁹ Bangs, *Arminius*, p.68

summary of the ‘true faith of Christians, and the doctrine which they ought to hold’, made in a letter sent in October 1548 to Edward Seymour (1500-1552), 1st Duke of Somerset, and Protector of England under Edward VI, does not include any reference to predestination.¹⁰⁰ I am not convinced that our present day categorisation of Calvinists and Arminians would have proved acceptable to scholars, or to the Church at large, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Nor am I assured that the issue of predestination formed the obsessive dominance in their thinking that is apparent in some of our present day interpretations.¹⁰¹

One final point apropos of the need to define our terminology: it is not a straightforward process, for labels can have more than one shade of meaning. Fincham makes the point that if our aim is to understand the full range of issues confronting Stuart Protestants, much will depend on the categories we employ for English Protestants.¹⁰² The intention is of importance, but in order to fulfil that objective we need to understand what we mean when we speak of Stuart Protestants, or English Protestantism, for Protestantism in England was not confined to the Church of England and, in spite of the many volumes written upon the subject, it remains difficult to locate, or offer, a succinct definition. In the early modern English context, Protestantism can be seen as being both political and religious, or as institutional and at the same time ideological. It manifested itself on the one hand as a legally established national Church, grounded upon theologically defined formularies, the Articles of Religion — its confession of faith — the Book of Common Prayer, and the Ordinal. By contrast in its ideological conception, Protestantism was an evangelical belief system which was not confined to a single ecclesiastical institution, but founded instead upon the ‘Word of God’ as propounded in pulpit and print, pressing for the submission of the individual to a personal process of repentance, faith and a commitment to godliness as the means of salvation. Marshall and Ryrie are among those who have argued that it is not possible to speak with confidence of the characteristics of the English Protestant identity in its early stages anyway. ‘Pre-Elizabethan “Protestantism” was a loose and fractious movement ... but out of it dominant political and theological refrains were able to emerge’.¹⁰³ In the institutional category it retained much of its pre-Reformation ecclesiastical structure whilst developing its own identity distinct from the Continental versions. In its ideological form its concern was for purity of religious

¹⁰⁰ Calvin, *Letters*, pp.94-95 (October 22, 1548)

¹⁰¹ For an extended analysis of the doctrines of Arminianism and Calvinism, see Sell, *Great Debate*, pp.1-23

¹⁰² Fincham, ‘Introduction’, p.6

¹⁰³ Marshall and Ryrie, *Beginnings*, p.13

commitment. Cranmer's 1553 Forty-Two Articles declared from the outset their intention: the 'avoiding of controversie in opinions, and the establishment of godlie concorde, in certeine matiers of Religion'.¹⁰⁴ The Thirty-Nine Articles that followed in 1571 — now amended and approved by Elizabeth — repeated the intention: they were articles 'agreed ... according to the computation of the Churche of Englande, for the avoiding of diversities of opinions and for the stablishing of content touching true religion'.¹⁰⁵ The objective was clear, but with the passage of time it became increasingly difficult to retain a united Protestant identity both in theology and notions of church worship and supervision.

This problem of category definition can raise even wider questions, for what have we in mind when we use the title, 'Church', as in 'English Church', or 'Elizabethan Church', or 'Restoration Church'? In its broadest sense — indeed in its truest sense — 'Church' includes the whole corpus of Christian believers. The Protestant Church in England, the English Church and the Restoration Church are identities not to be equated only with the national Church. Indeed, in this wider understanding the English Church was not only Protestant. But in practice it is evident that it is normal among historians, when using these phrases, to refer to the legally established state Church, and that is the intention in this thesis. When it is our purpose to discuss a wider understanding of 'Church', as a body of believers, including those outside the Church of England, then that meaning needs to be identified in order to avoid misunderstanding.

So then, in the light of our present analysis, the requirement to identify clear categories faces difficulties for, as we anticipate examining the crucial years that led up to the Restoration and the great division in the 1660s, how far are we genuinely able to classify important categories for us, such as the 'Conformists' and 'Puritans', the 'Calvinists' and 'Arminians'? Given the spectrum of contemporary ideologies, added to the diversity of our own current interpretations, is it possible to identify a typical Puritan or Conformist at all? The Puritan especially is acknowledged to be incredibly difficult to categorise, and as Henry Parker (1604-1652) observed in 1641, 'by an enlargement of the name, the world is full of nothing but puritans'.¹⁰⁶ Collinson has satirically described the attempt to define the Puritan as 'a debate conducted among a group of blindfolded scholars in a darkened room about the shape and other attributes of the elephant sharing the room with them'.¹⁰⁷ Elsewhere Collinson describes Puritanism as, in many cases:

¹⁰⁴ Forty-two *Articles*, Title page

¹⁰⁵ Thirty-nine *Articles*, Title page

¹⁰⁶ Parker, *Discourse*, p.10

¹⁰⁷ Collinson, 'Comment', p.484

nothing other than the evangelical Calvinist Protestantism which was prevalent in early seventeenth-century England as well as in other reformed communities of Western Europe, and which some of its opponents *chose* to describe and attack as Puritanism. It was not Puritanism until it was so described.¹⁰⁸

To cap them all, Hill has cryptically summarised all our difficulties, asserting that ‘the word “Puritan” ... is an admirable refuge from clarity of thought’.¹⁰⁹ If that was Hill’s considered view, we are bound to ask why it was that he used the term so consistently.

Then there is the term, ‘Laudian’, a word which would also benefit from definition, but this is a label that receives explanation in the section devoted to Laud and his involvement.¹¹⁰

Research into early modern religious history can be bedevilled by problems of definition and categorisation. Lake and Michael Questier, in contrast to Fincham, maintain that category formation and definition both become hindrances to the normal processes of empirical research,¹¹¹ and as White has observed:

[t]he more one reads in the theology of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the more one is aware of the dangers of over-simple categories, and of studying one facet of doctrine in isolation from other doctrines and from pastoral practice.¹¹²

But then I shall be questioning whether the terms that we have sought to address, however defined, typified the daily spiritual life of Christian believers in our period. These are not the crucial issues found to be dominating the life of those seated in the pews at the local parish Church, nor yet in the ‘gathered congregation’ down the road. The sermons preached from pulpits by parish clergy and ministers provide ample evidence that these were not the topics to be found at the heart of their gospel. There we find that it was their pastoral concern for their congregations that inspired them, whatever their doctrinal or ecclesiological persuasion. What worried them was the spiritual standing of their hearers, not their doctrinal beliefs. Yet, despite this driven motivation in their own parish, when we examine the evidence to be found in their written expressions of polemical debate, what impinged upon their relationship with other Christians were diverse opinions about what constitutes essential belief: ecclesial and evangelical dogma were permitted the power to divide. Thus, among those for whom their relationship with God was of major significance, their calling as ministers and pastors of the flock, and the biblical insistence on the maintenance of unity, were not sufficient to prevent some — not a few — from dividing.

¹⁰⁸ Collinson, *Puritan Character*, p.15

¹⁰⁹ Hill, *Society and Puritanism*, p.13

¹¹⁰ Below, pp.109-120

¹¹¹ Lake and Questier, ‘Introduction’, p.xiii

¹¹² White, ‘Rise of Arminianism’, pp.32-54, and 35n

The evidence for this assertion we are about to explore, but first, as we begin our move towards the momentous events of 1640-1660, we must examine the perceptions of historians to the subject of our exercise, commencing with the historiography of the events of the second half of the sixteenth century.

b. Historiographical review: perceptions past and present

Anyone who is not prepared to enter on risky experiments deserves our respect for his solid principles. But, conversely, perhaps he will concede to us that historical work cannot live without reconstruction.

Ernst Käsemann¹¹³

Before we examine the nature, causes, and effects of religious division in the early modern English Church, we need to consider the events that led to these controversies, in particular the evolving impact and consequences of the sixteenth-century Reformation of religious life and thought in England. Understandably, given the dramatic part played by the Reformation in effecting a lasting transformation of the English, and indeed the British way of life, much has been written about this period. Our shelves are weighed down by the scholarly works that have been published on the subject by historians, political analysts, and theologians alike.¹¹⁴ The Reformation had a significant relevance to disputes in the early modern English Church given the diversity of views held by contemporary thinkers about its nature and objective. This diversity of opinion about the Reformation continues to foster debate and it is important that we take account of those evaluations relative to our study.

Recent studies

Recent decades have witnessed an intense debate on the nature of the Reformation, what it was, who instigated it, was it enthusiastically received or was it resisted by the general populace, did it achieve its aims, and was it rapid or prolonged? Given the relevance of their contribution to our subject we commence with an examination of the contribution of a number of recent influential revisionist interpretations that have emerged from among historians, amongst whom is Christopher Haigh who is representative of a band of thinkers, including J.J. Scarisbrick and Eamon Duffy who, since the early 1980s, have

¹¹³ Ernst Käsemann, *New Testament Questions of Today* (London, 1969), p.83

¹¹⁴ Peter Marshall identifies well over 2,000 books in the British Library which include the word "Reformation" in the title, published between 1960-2000. Up until the year 2007, the total is 563 for this century. Marshall, 'English Reformation', p.564

argued that the Reformation was not as inevitable as previous historians, such as A.G. Dickens, have argued. It is maintained that the Reformation was far from being a popular uprising from 'below' as some revisionists — erroneously — maintain Dickens was asserting. That would be an approach which Scarisbrick considers 'a basically Whiggish and ultimately Protestant view of things'.¹¹⁵ Haigh has turned that, as a concept, on its head and maintains that the Reformation was not a walkover for the Protestants. In his view there was no ground-swell of dissatisfaction pressing for change; it appeared out of the blue. The Reformation was a purely fortuitous spin-off of Tudor political intrigue and the conversion of the populace took a long time and was never fully completed, 'a long drawn out struggle between reformist minorities and a reluctant majority'.¹¹⁶ Tyacke notes that in this assessment, with which he disagrees, 'such was the enduring strength of Catholicism that Protestantism remained for long a sickly plant, its survival far from assured'.¹¹⁷ Haigh's argument is that by the end of the sixteenth century churchgoers were de-Catholicised but not Protestantised. 'The Reformation did not produce a Protestant England: it produced a divided England'.¹¹⁸ He maintains that the official, legislative 'Reformation was made by princes and politicians manoeuvring to their own advantages, ... it became effective [that is, it achieved limited local dominance] ... because it gained the support of some local notables'.¹¹⁹ The motivation for change, he claims, was politically inspired, resulting from a series of conflicts and crises and of the interaction of social, geographical, and political influences which varied from region to region.¹²⁰ The incentive for reformation was not doctrinal. As Gunnar Hillerdal has it, '[t]he Church of England was severed from the Western Church before any doctrinal reformation took place'.¹²¹

The religious beliefs of the populace, it is argued, were less easy to reform:

The political Reformations had succeeded in driving Catholic public worship from the churches; but the Protestant Reformation did not generate widespread attachment to Protestant doctrines of justification ... So men and women expected to be saved through the Church, as their forebears had been.¹²²

Scarisbrick maintains that 'the "Protestantisation" of English men and women was an uphill task and never perfectly achieved'.¹²³ By the term 'Protestantisation', Scarisbrick appears to

¹¹⁵ Scarisbrick, *Reformation*, p.1

¹¹⁶ Haigh, *English Reformations*, p.209

¹¹⁷ Tyacke, 're-thinking', p.2

¹¹⁸ Haigh, *English Reformations*, p.209

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.210

¹²⁰ Haigh, 'Historiography', pp.14-15, and 27-28

¹²¹ Hillerdal, *Hooker*, p.10

¹²² Haigh, *English Reformations*, pp.288-289

¹²³ Scarisbrick, *Reformation*, p.17

mean the radical amendment of pre-Reformation forms of Church worship, its ceremonies, symbolism and elaborate church buildings. The Church in England from that perspective, at the accession of Henry VIII, is claimed to have been healthy and prosperous, supported by sympathetic and generous Catholic giving as evidenced in contemporary wills, churchwardens' accounts, and the rich adornment of pre-Reformation Churches.

These interpretations have fostered a wealth of responses both for and against and, in later publications, Dickens returned to the fray with a revision of his book *The English Reformation* in which he found no reason radically to amend his stance and, in a persuasive article, he expressed surprise at Haigh's persistent reference to him as a champion of 'Reformation from below'. He insisted that he was rather a believer in 'territorial variety' and that 'one should carefully study regional contrasts before venturing upon generalisations concerning the realm as a whole'.¹²⁴ It remained his view that the revisionist argument undervalues the influence of medieval dissent and, in particular, the ongoing effects of Lollardy. It was Lollardy with its emphasis on the Bible, its anti-clericalism, its radical views of the sacraments and its denial of saint worship that, Dickens claimed, was to provide 'a spring-board of critical dissent from which the Protestant Reformation could overleap the walls of orthodoxy'.¹²⁵ This is a view that Duffy challenges: 'I do think that Reformation historians have by and large overestimated [Lollardy's] numbers and their significance',¹²⁶ although in his review of Duffy's book, D. Aers notes that the author 'is so confident ... that he feels no need to offer a shred of evidence for this claim'.¹²⁷ J.F. Davis takes a quite contrary view to that of Duffy. He is certain that interpretations that argue that the Reformation was an act of state seriously undermine the role of Lollardy. In a cogent essay in which he examines the evidence of Lollardy's widespread influence right through to the Reformation and beyond, he argues that

the English Reformation was really a process of religious change that gradually spread upwards from Lollard artisans and merchants, to academic reformers of Evangelism and Erastianism, and then to the aristocracy. Lollardy was a profound influence on the Reformation.¹²⁸

Lollard ideas, Davis maintains, contributed to the English Reformation 'on the level of both bishops and artisans, and ... persisted to form a basis for Puritanism later on'.¹²⁹

¹²⁴ Dickens, 'Early Expansion', pp.159-160

¹²⁵ Dickens, *English Reformation*, 1989, p.36 and O'Day, *Debate*, pp.138-139

¹²⁶ Duffy, *Altars*, p.6, cited by Aers, 'Altars', p.102

¹²⁷ Aers, 'Altars', p.102

¹²⁸ Davis, 'Lollardy', p.38

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.52-53

Another major influence, Dickens argues, was the introduction of the vernacular Bible. This included not only William Tyndale's version of the New Testament, the Pentateuch, the Apocrypha and the Book of Jonah (from 1525), but also that of Miles Coverdale (1535), later adapted into the Great Bible of 1539, and the 'Matthew Bible' (?1537) from John Rogers (1500-1555), the translator who was, under the Marian persecution, burnt at the stake for his efforts at Smithfield in 1555.

Nor should we overlook the first complete translation into English of the Bible produced well before Tyndale in the late 1300s by John Wycliffe (c1328-1384) and his supporters. The surviving manuscripts of the Wycliffite versions have been the subject of a thorough analysis by Mary Dove, and in her estimation they represent 'the most substantial achievement of the Wycliffite movement'.¹³⁰ It was the availability of the English Bible on a national scale which ensured, in Dickens's view, 'victory ... over papal authority and over the saint cults,' in addition to the successful exposure of relic hoaxes.¹³¹ In this view, Dickens has the support of Peter Matheson who argues that, linked with new technology, the 'printing press, that innovative replicator of identical and readable copies', the Bible 'burst on the sixteenth century with the force of a revelation'. The Scriptures, now in the hands of both preacher and people, had 'urgent implications for everything from the most intimate of personal concerns to the entire ordering of society'.¹³² Moreover, Matheson maintains, 'when the Bible burst on lay people it was first and foremost by courtesy of an extraordinary revival in preaching'.¹³³ Matheson is evidently convinced, but not all historians would agree with this assertion, as we shall see.

The strength of Dickens's position is that it affirms the spiritual and doctrinal element in Church reform as against ceremony and symbolism and, as Rosemary O'Day maintains, whilst details of the Dickens argument have been challenged it has not yet been superseded and remains 'far and away the best account of the movement for religious reform in England and Wales in the later Middle Ages'.¹³⁴ O'Day further argues that 'no recent scholar has claimed that England was Protestant prior to 1558 ... The geographical spread [was] slow until Elizabeth's reign ... [but] there is sufficient evidence to show that Protestantism was early gaining strength among the influential'.¹³⁵

¹³⁰ Dove, *First English Bible*, p.1

¹³¹ Dickens, *English Reformation*, 1964, pp.129-138

¹³² Matheson, 'The Reformation', p.70

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ O'Day, *Debate*, p.137

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p.153

The revisionist interpretations of Haigh and Scarisbrick are not new. O'Day reviews the work of A.F. Pollard who, in a biography of Henry VIII published at the beginning of the twentieth century, argued that the Reformation was imposed on the Church by civil powers, by Parliament, and by a king whose overpowering incentive was to provide an heir to his throne. The Reformation was a creature of Henry's will, yet he concedes that it could not have happened had his people not allowed it. It was not a spontaneous reaction to the Roman yoke by either clergy or people, nor was it a long sought-after reformation of doctrine. It was accepted because the national mood was for the control of the Church to be in national hands, prepared as it was to put its trust in the power of princes.¹³⁶ Tyacke also maintains that Haigh's arguments are not original. He considers that they are the resurrection of an early twentieth-century Catholic interpretation by Cardinal Aiden Gasquet.¹³⁷

There is support for Haigh's hypothesis from Doran and Durston, who suggest that 'it is difficult to see how without this official Reformation there would have been any popular Reformation'. They place reliance on wills and the apparent record within them of religious belief and the generous bequests made in the Church's favour and, in their judgement, this evidence constitutes a convincing indication that in the early sixteenth century the vast majority of the laity remained satisfied with Catholic forms of worship.¹³⁸ But the approach is problematic. The majority of wills were made by the old, the wealthy, and by property owners, and they are not representative of the population. Even for the minority who made a will they were frequently made as a dying wish, written by a scrivener or, more commonly, by the parish priest on behalf of the testator. O'Day argues that 'it would take an effort of will to dictate or write a decidedly Protestant testament when the establishment was Catholic and vice versa'.¹³⁹ She insists, 'we must not use wills to prove what they cannot in fact prove', and in support she cites M. Spufford, who argues that the evidence is not statistically sound.¹⁴⁰

Along with Haigh and Scarisbrick, Doran and Durston make much of the slow process of conversion to Protestantism in the mid-sixteenth century. They note that before 1547 there were few Protestants in England, and that by the 1560's there were not many more. 'Many ... found the new English services, the austere church interiors, and the emphasis on preaching ... alien and uncongenial'. There was 'an endemic lay hostility towards ministers

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.102-111, reviewing A.F. Pollard, *Henry VIII* (London, 1905)

¹³⁷ Tyacke, 're-thinking', pp.2-3

¹³⁸ Doran and Durston, *Princes*, p.191

¹³⁹ O'Day, *Debate*, p.157

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, and Spufford, *Contrasting Communities*, p.334

and a widespread indifference towards organised religion'.¹⁴¹ Lake and Questier support this argument, suggesting that the spread of Protestantism was hampered by its iconoclastic attitude, with the people turned off by the interminable sermons and improving books.¹⁴² Are we sure about that? Books are not printed unless there is a receptive market. Whilst literacy was relatively low — only 30% among men and only 10% among women even by the 1640s¹⁴³ — religious publications were increasingly popular throughout our period. From an average of some 200 titles *per annum* in the Elizabethan and early Stuart years, the numbers were transformed from the 1640s onwards: the Thomason collection shows an average of 680 titles collected between 1640 and 1660, whilst the Wing catalogue shows some 1,000 titles a year with peaks of 2,000. The numerous editions of popular religious publications could each run into 3,000 copies.¹⁴⁴ As Baxter averred of his own voluminous writings, 'if men had not leisure to read our Writings, the Booksellers would silence us ... For none would Print them'.¹⁴⁵ As for allegations that people were deterred by lengthy sermons, this is a possibility, but we should ask, how often was that the case? How widespread were the complaints, who made them, and where might they be found? Perhaps we should take care not to assume that our current aversion to lengthy religious orations was replicated in the English parish church four hundred years ago. Not every commentator would agree with this critique of Puritan discourses. Arnold Hunt cites Collinson when he argues that

recent historians of the Reformation have been sadly mistaken in considering the sermon as ... technically demanding and unwelcome ... they have been over-pessimistic in their assumptions about the difficulty, even the impossibility, of instilling that information into hearts and minds not well disposed to receive it.

This is a view with which Hunt heartily concurs: 'the present writer can only say "Amen"'.¹⁴⁶

J.I Packer, a theologian, further maintains that:

Puritan preaching, though profound in its content, was popular in its style. ... Dignified simplicity was their ideal. ... Puritan preaching often possesses a striking eloquence ... that results when words are treated ... as the servants of a noble meaning.

'Popular' preaching he defines as the manner in which Puritans 'talked to their congregations in plain, straightforward, homely English'.¹⁴⁷ Packer cites Bunyan and

¹⁴¹ Doran and Durston, *Princes*, p.193

¹⁴² Lake and Questier, 'Prisons', p.195

¹⁴³ Cressy, *Literacy*, pp.176-177

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.47

¹⁴⁵ Baxter, *Christian Directory*, Advertisements, unpaginated

¹⁴⁶ Collinson, 'Religious culture', p.47, cited in Hunt, *Hearing*, p.11

Baxter as examples together with the *Westminster Directory for the Publique Worship of God* (1644/5) as expressing the ideal manner in which preaching should be done.¹⁴⁸ He aligns with the view that the new emphasis on preaching brought spiritual release to those who had previously been taught that the grace and forgiveness of God could only be found in severe religious observances and penances. Justification by faith alone was the ‘gospel’ now being preached, at least in those parishes that had a preaching ministry sympathetic to Reformed doctrine. Acceptance of the Reformation in England would depend not just upon social and political pressures, but also upon the effectiveness of this new teaching. It was now being proclaimed that God’s mercy was freely available through the exercise of faith, a favour not confined to the efficacy of a priestly controlled ritual, out of reach behind a rood screen, but openly to be enjoyed in everyday experience. We need to ask how effectual this evangelical proclamation was. In short, did it work? Whether or not there was a groundswell for change,¹⁴⁹ whether or not the pre-Reformation Church was popular and healthy is not the issue. A ‘new’ understanding of Christianity was now on offer, perceived by the reformers as a return to the primitive faith of the Apostles. Did this message take hold of hearts and minds and reform men and women’s beliefs and practices at all levels in society or not? Perhaps historians are not looking sufficiently closely at the devotional and didactic content of the ‘preaching’. If, as is suggested, Reformed preaching was unpopular, what was the response in those areas that were exposed to this incessant sermonizing? Locations have been identified where Protestantism progressed, such as London, the Home Counties and East Anglia. Why was this? Was it in those areas that the Reformed faith was being proclaimed, and if so, it can hardly be argued that the cause of Protestantism was being hindered by ‘interminable sermons’. It is too often concluded that preaching was an unpopular dreary imposition when, as we have seen above, Collinson and Hunt have argued that sermons were effective, whilst Julian Davies has argued, sermons could prove to be popular even to the illiterate, and there were those who would travel miles in the hope of hearing a ‘good’ sermon or lecture.¹⁵⁰ In his exploration of the spirituality of the Reformed tradition, David Cornick observes that at the heart of its spiritual discipline, Reformed liturgy

is structured around the Word, preparing to hear it, listening to it, entering into its exposition either through listening and thought, or by more active participation and then preparing to

¹⁴⁷ Packer, *Quest*, p.285

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.277-279

¹⁴⁹ O’Day, *Debate*, p.152

¹⁵⁰ See above, pp.60-61, and Davies, *Caroline Captivity*, pp.126-127

live it in the world. Week by week huge intellectual and practical energy is put into that activity.¹⁵¹

When we return to the revisionist historians, their perception of the Church, prior to the 1530s, as having been ‘healthy and prosperous’, its Church buildings well-endowed and ornate, its worship awesome, is hardly germane to the subject. They may have been, but seen from the Reformed perspective, and certainly that of the Puritans, religion is not about beautiful Churches and awesome worship, it is about regenerate men and women living godly lives. Generous benefactions, even if they were not attempts to gain merit for the after-life, we might consider evidence of an approval of the *status quo*, but the resulting beautiful buildings, and the ornate worship that went with them were considered a deception. For the Puritan, the purpose of the Church is not to provide a ‘popular religion’; its purpose is to instruct men and women in the Word so that they understand, and are able to respond in faith to ‘the truth’. The Puritan did not ask whether his case for reform has approval. Reform, he insisted, is necessary, and it is required in order to bring into being a Church so transformed that it changes the beliefs of a people considered to be living in ignorance of the ways of God.

Our task of course, as historians, is not to make value judgements on this Reformed methodology but to establish whether the vision achieved its purpose and, in that respect, we cannot escape noticing that a devoutly Catholic country had within the course of two or three generations become one of the most Protestant countries in Europe. Indeed N.L. Jones argues that each generation brought its own reformation, a process he terms the ‘changing models of virtue’. Each succeeding generation ‘found familiar and proper what their parents had seen as new and strange’ in a process in which ‘children questioned their parents’ conceptions of virtue and senior members faced scorn for their old fashioned views’.¹⁵² By such a progression reform had become so marked that within a century England was to become the birthplace of a plurality of Protestant religious persuasions, both conservative and radical, that have affected the nature of worldwide Christendom ever since.

Debates on the veracity and implications of the revisionist approach continue and they remain far from achieving a consensus. Scott A. Wenig, in a book which examines the extent and rate of change in the early Elizabethan Church, identifies a further approach as he focuses on the ecclesiastical thought and influence of the reformist element in Elizabeth’s initial episcopate. His study concentrates on the returned Marian exiles Richard

¹⁵¹ Cornick, *Letting God*, pp.55-56

¹⁵² Jones, ‘Living the Reformations’, p.288

Cox, Bishop of Ely (1559-81), John Jewel, Bishop of Salisbury (1560-71), Edwin Sandys, Bishop of Worcester (1560-70), and James Pilkington, Bishop of Durham (1561-76), drawing conclusions on how the more progressive members of the episcopate used the existing Church structure to 'promote their own version of reform at both the national and local levels', this with varied success. Wenig maintains that historians such as Haigh and Scarisbrick have neglected the influence of the first Elizabethan bishops after 1559. The revisionists, he argues,

sometimes [give] the impression that the Reformation never happened, and that the mass was still widely performed after 1570, and that the majority of the English people were practicing Catholics into the later decades of the sixteenth century!¹⁵³

Tyacke supports this assertion as he enters the debate arguing that the revisionist understanding is a Catholic view of events set in opposition to Protestant explanations, and he claims that the revisionists' stark choice between 'from below' or 'from above', or alternatively between 'fast' or 'slow', is illusory. The 'concept of a Reformation from below ... is something of a revisionist straw man'¹⁵⁴ and to interpret the Reformation in terms of the enforcing legislation gives a distorted picture.¹⁵⁵ It fails to take account of the 'role of ideas' and the 'important part played by a clerical vanguard', and it seriously neglects, he argues, 'the subversive potential particularly of the doctrine of justification by faith alone, undermining, as it did, the whole panoply of medieval Catholic teaching'.¹⁵⁶ For Tyacke, the Reformation should be seen as a doctrinally radical restructuring of the Church's life and witness and, along with Fincham, he maintains that it provided a legacy under Edward VI of a 'thoroughly reformed religion, ... which had a decisive impact on the Elizabethan settlement of 1559-63', changes which withstood the influence of Elizabeth's own religious conservatism, and saw the laity as not 'merely the passive recipients'.¹⁵⁷ We shall be looking for evidence of this as we take a look at a controversy that arose in the Elizabethan Church which was at the heart of the debate about the extent of Church reform.¹⁵⁸ MacCulloch supports Tyacke's view arguing that the 'myth of the English Reformation is that it did not happen, or that it happened by accident rather than design, or that it was half-hearted and sought a middle way between Catholicism and Protestantism'. This is, he argues, a view spawned by nineteenth-century Anglo-Catholicism which has resulted in, 'if anything, [a]

¹⁵³ Wenig, *Altars*, p.253

¹⁵⁴ Tyacke, 're-thinking', p.4

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p.6

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p.4

¹⁵⁷ Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, p.2

¹⁵⁸ Below, Chapter 6, pp.196-212

revolution in the writing of the Church of England's history ... more thoroughgoing than [its] architectural revolution'.¹⁵⁹

It is my intention to argue that it was indeed doctrine — strongly maintained divergent theological opinion — that was the motivating imperative causing dissention and division in the early modern English Christendom, and supporting this assertion is this view that the Reformation, and subsequent debates, were driven by doctrinal incentives. Aspirations for the reformation of church buildings, of ecclesiology, of clerical apparel and liturgy, were the by-products of theological positioning, not the initiating driving force.

The Puritans and early Twentieth-century Histories

In Collinson's view, prior to the 1960s, perceptions of the post-Reformation Puritan movement were 'obscure'.¹⁶⁰ He nevertheless acknowledges that major contributions that were made to the understanding of the Puritan ethos in the first half of the twentieth century by historians such as A.F. Scott Pearson, William Haller, and M.M. Knappen, to whom should be added Powel Mills Dawley. The weakness in the input from historians of this period and earlier is that their appraisals are often coloured by their academic or factional interests, an evident danger for all historiographical analysts. In his extensive biography of Thomas Cartwright (1535-1603)¹⁶¹ Scott Pearson, a Scottish Presbyterian, reveals his sympathies by his relative treatment of Whitgift and Cartwright. Whitgift is seen as the onerous disciplinarian who, as Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, grasped the 'opportunity to get rid of the obnoxious Puritan', whereas Cartwright meekly bore the persecution.¹⁶² Scott Pearson is not sympathetic to the view that Cartwright's quarrel with the English Church was theological. Cartwright's concerns were about the Church's structure and government,¹⁶³ and it was his scheme for a Presbyterian State Church that 'dominated the field and moulded the Puritan-Presbyterian movement'.¹⁶⁴ Scott Pearson considered a close examination of Cartwright's life and teaching of importance 'because they reflect the quintessential features of Elizabethan Puritan-Presbyterianism'.¹⁶⁵ Cartwright reflected Puritanism at its best: 'that immediacy of spiritual knowledge ... sometimes recognized as the essence of Puritanism'.¹⁶⁶ In a review of Scott Pearson's work

¹⁵⁹ MacCulloch, 'Myth', pp.1-3

¹⁶⁰ Collinson, *Puritan Movement*, pp.11-12

¹⁶¹ Not to be confused with his grandson, Thomas Cartwright (1634-1689), Bishop of Chester(1686-1689)

¹⁶² Scott Pearson, *Cartwright*, pp.63-64

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, p.407

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p.408

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p.406

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p.406

E.W. Watson questions Scott Pearson's judgment and consistency in laying the blame for the silencing of the Puritans on the opposition of the bishops, but sees this fault as evidence of his 'vigorous partisanship' which alone could have carried the historian through the necessary 'tedious research'.¹⁶⁷

Haller's *The Rise of Puritanism* is a book that results from his reading of Puritan sermons, popular expositions of doctrine and spiritual biographies in his search for an understanding of Milton's *Areopagitica*.¹⁶⁸ As a result he avoids the 'learned and technical treatise[s]',¹⁶⁹ an approach that is apparent in the scant treatment given to the Admonition Controversy and the contest between Whitgift and Cartwright. He asserts that following the 'expulsion' of Cartwright from Cambridge, with the Queen requiring her bishops to 'assert their authority and her own ... to bear hard upon the disobedient', the Puritans' overriding devotion was to the production of literature and preaching.¹⁷⁰ Knappen's *Tudor Puritanism*, by comparison, is a work resulting from a study of Puritanism related to his interest in 'idealism', and its place in a well ordered society. His analysis sees idealism as a powerful social force, and the study of idealistic movements such as Puritanism is considered of importance in that we can learn lessons from the success or failure of past movements.¹⁷¹ Dawley's *Whitgift* comprises the substance of his Hale lectures for 1953, given as part of his preparation for an intended full-length biography of the archbishop. Published virtually as presented the book is moulded by the constraints of the presentation. Dawley argued that too often the Elizabethan Church is perceived as in an indeterminate phase whereas, he maintains, it was precisely in those forty-five years that the distinctive and unique place that Anglicanism occupies in the Christian tradition was established.¹⁷²

Early Historians

Prior to the twentieth century it is difficult to find a history that does not stem from a prejudicial perspective. In the nineteenth century Benjamin Brook's *Lives of the Puritans* was written to show how 'Nonconformity has been adorned by the holy lives of a multitude of good men ... consecrated by the blood of martyrs ... sanctioned by the approbation ... of heaven'. In his *Memoir of Cartwright*, he reviews

¹⁶⁷ Watson, 'Review', p.129

¹⁶⁸ Haller, *Rise*, p.ix

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p.ix

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.5, and 7

¹⁷¹ Knappen, *Tudor Puritanism*, pp.vi-vii

¹⁷² Dawley, *Whitgift*, p.ix

The entire history of Mr. Cartwright whose learned discussions, indefatigable labours, untiring zeal and accumulated sufferings, exhibit no ordinary degree of piety and devotedness to God ... He was long assailed by unrighteous criminations and severe intolerance; but fearlessly withstood the encroachment of ecclesiastical power, refused to barter his conscience for worldly emolument, and to degrade his principles by succumbing to a system of hierarchical domination.¹⁷³

In the eighteenth century Daniel Neal's *History of the Puritans* was written in much the same vein. He avers that the

design ... [of his] work is to preserve the Memory of those great and good men among the Reformers, ... for attempting a farther Reformation of its Disciplines and Ceremonies; and to account for the Rise and Progress of ... Separation ... which subsists to this day.¹⁷⁴

In contrast Sir George Paule (1563?-1637), the 'Comptroller of His Graces [Whitgift's] Household', published the first biography of Whitgift in 1612. His intentions also are clear. 'I have presumed to set downe the Godly and religious courses of the most Reverend Archbishop Whitgift, ... to make knowne his worthie parts to future ages'.¹⁷⁵ Paule has little regard for Cartwright. The Puritan, in his estimation, 'grew highly conceited of himselfe for learning and Holinesse, and a great Contemner of others that were not of his mind'.¹⁷⁶ Of the *Admonition*, he concludes:

some of principall note amongst these Disciplinarians ... published a seditious Treatise, entituled, *An Admonition to the Parliament* being ... the very summarie ... of their shameless slanders against the govenours [of the Church].¹⁷⁷

Fortunately from Paule's viewpoint Whitgift 'spared not his paines in writing a learned answer', as a result of which Cartwright,

seeing the ... walles and foundation of his new founded Church government already shaken, and tottering, endeavoured to underprop the same with a *Reply*. The weakenesse thereof Doctor Whitgift displayed in his Defence.¹⁷⁸

The established position gained additional support from the voluminous productions of John Strype (1643-1737), who published at the end of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth. Among his books were *Whitgift* and the *Annals* which include, in the Appendices, his transcription of a number of original documents. Strype, in the view of W.D.J. Cargill Thompson, has 'by modern standards ... considerable deficiencies as an

¹⁷³ Brook, *Lives of the Puritans*, I, p.viii, and Brook, *Memoir of Cartwright*, p.v

¹⁷⁴ Neal, *Puritans*, Preface, unpaginated

¹⁷⁵ Paule, *Whitgift*, Epistle dedicatory, A3r

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.7-8. Brook considered this accusation 'a most notorious slander': Brook, *Lives of the Puritans*, II, p.137

¹⁷⁷ Paule, *Whitgift*, p.14

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p.15

editor and transcriber of documents'.¹⁷⁹ Nevertheless, these early sources provide invaluable information given the application of judicious care when handling such partisan material.

In Chapters 6 and 7 we shall turn our attention to the contemporary evidence itself when we shall consider the 1559 *Book of Common Prayer*; *An Admonition to the Parliament* of 1572, including *A View of popishe abuses*, both works commonly attributed to Field and Wilcox, *A Second Admonition to the Parliament*, published in the same year and usually attributed to Cartwright, and the documents relating to the controversy between Whitgift and Cartwright, namely Whitgift's *Answer* and *Defence*, and Cartwright's *Rephye*, *Second Replie*, and the *Rest of the Seconde Replie*. These, together with relevant works from Andrewes and Hooker, representative of the Conformists, and Perkins and Walter Travers (?1548-1635) for the Puritans, will form the principal sixteenth-century input into our comparative study of religious dissention in the sixteenth century, which will be set in contrast to the divisive divisions, which we shall first examine, in the seventeenth century.¹⁸⁰

Having considered the interpretations of the historians now at some length we shall be examining the views of theologians to our subject but, before that, we shall take a preliminary look at the nature of religion in the seventeenth century, and at the Church, upon which we will be seeking their theological perspective.

¹⁷⁹ Cargill Thompson, 'Strype', pp.195-196

¹⁸⁰ For details of the selection criteria, see pp.104-105

Chapter 2

The Seventeenth-Century Church

It hath been the wisdom of the Church of England, ever since the first compiling of her Publick Liturgy, to keep the mean between the two extremes, of too much stiffness in refusing, and of too much easiness in admitting any variation from it.

Preface to the 1662 Book of Common Prayer

At the turn of the seventeenth century the Church in England could still be spoken of in the singular remaining, for the most part, inclusive. Sunday attendance at the parish Church remained compulsory in an England in which conversion to Protestantism was still in progress.¹⁸¹ The Church based itself on the Elizabethan compromise, its hierarchy doctrinally settled into a pragmatic Elizabethan creedal Calvinism whilst, under the influence of thinkers such as Hooker and Andrewes, it retained a structure distinct from its continental neighbours among the Reformed Churches.

The English Church at the accession of James I to the English throne, whilst not exempt from inherited controversy and tensions, could be said to be at relative peace under the influence of a prevailing ‘Calvinist consensus’. As Aiden Nichols argues, in James’s reign any shift towards an Arminian doctrine of grace was ‘set to the service of a liturgical piety’ and was largely confined to the episcopate. The lower clergy and laity retained their hostility to anti-Calvinist soteriology: ‘below the highest level, the dominant party in the Jacobean church was ... Calvinist’.¹⁸² Jacobean ecclesiastical policy sought to exclude extremes, aiming for unity rather than uniformity. ‘The church was to be united around the assertion and defence of James’s God given powers as a Christian king against the threats posed to them by the Presbyterians on the one hand and the papists on the other’.¹⁸³ Radicals were considered to be inherently dangerous subversives, thereby ruling themselves out of debates for change in religious policy.¹⁸⁴ As James himself put it, ‘there have never been hitherto any particular church in the world ... that hath allowed such ministers to preach in it as have refused to subscribe to the doctrine and discipline settled in it and maintained by it’.¹⁸⁵ At the Hampton Court Conference (1604) the four Puritan representatives,¹⁸⁶ chosen by the Privy Council, demonstrated their moderation by

¹⁸¹ Fincham, *Prelate*, p.3

¹⁸² Nichols, *Panther*, p.69

¹⁸³ Lake, ‘Avant-garde Conformity’, p.114

¹⁸⁴ Webster, ‘Puritanism’, p.49

¹⁸⁵ James I, cited by Kenyon, *Stuart Constitution*, p.114, from *Lords Journals*, II, p.658, (July 23, 1610)

¹⁸⁶ John Reynolds, Laurence Chaderton, John Knewstub and Thomas Sparke.

presenting pleas of little substance, petitions which James listened to, but which resulted in little action by way of ecclesiastical and liturgical reform.¹⁸⁷ It is not clear, Hunt argues, whether the Puritan delegation was genuine in its moderation or whether the approach was assumed for self-preservation in the face of opponents too ready to smear their reputations.¹⁸⁸ In the outcome the king required subscription by the clergy to Whitgift's 1583 'Articles Touching Preachers and other Orders', but with imposition a matter of persuasion rather than compulsion.

Nevertheless, there remained in the Church a groundswell of objection to conformity, and in the following five years some eighty clergymen were ejected for their failure to subscribe including Bradshaw, a protégé of the centenarian and first Master at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, Laurence Chaderton (?1536-1640), Paul Baynes (1573-1617), a disciple of Perkins, and William Ames (1576-1633), also a disciple of Perkins.¹⁸⁹ But, as Fincham has demonstrated, in most dioceses — for varying reasons including the fear of offending powerful lay patrons — prelates were reluctant to use the ultimate sanction of deprivation. 'Active judges ... relied on other disciplinary weapons [such as] admonition, penance, excommunication, confiscation of licences or even suspension and sequestration'.¹⁹⁰

This Jacobean period of royal conciliation and muted Nonconformity drew to a close as controversies reasserted themselves at the accession of Charles I. Tensions were aggravated in the 1630s by increasing pressures on the clergy to conform to a Laudian programme of prescribed religious ceremony, this of sufficient rigour that by the middle of the century Puritan reaction is considered by some historians to have been the principal cause of the subsequent civil strife.¹⁹¹ Those wars were to culminate in monumental changes in the life of the Christian Church in England and by the century's close English Christendom was no longer united, but divided both ecclesiastically and doctrinally. What were the origins of the bloody civil strife that divided England in the middle years of the seventeenth century? This is a widely debated question, and whilst it is not our primary concern it is nonetheless relevant to our exploration of seventeenth-century religious controversy. To what extent was division over religion a contributory factor, and to what degree did the English Civil Wars contribute to the Church's subsequent break up? As we have already noted,¹⁹² there are historians who have concluded that the primary, though not the sole, cause of the

¹⁸⁷ Webster, 'Puritanism', p.49

¹⁸⁸ Hunt, 'Chaderton', p.209

¹⁸⁹ Webster, 'Puritanism', pp.49-50

¹⁹⁰ Fincham, *Prelate*, pp.208-209. This topic is expanded in Chapter 8, pp.268-269

¹⁹¹ For a contrary view see reference to Alan Cromartie's analysis; below, p.112

¹⁹² Above, p.40

English Civil Wars was religion, and amongst these we have identified Tyacke and Morrill, but there are historians who disagree. Julian Davies and George Bernard are amongst those who assert that divergent religious beliefs played a relatively minor role. In their estimation the decisive issues were not religious but political. That there were doctrinal disputes throughout the period is not denied but, it is claimed, these were largely confined to intellectuals and had relatively little causal effect upon the traumatic events of the mid-seventeenth century. There are however problems associated with this understanding for religion itself was deeply embedded into political life in the seventeenth century anyway.

In marked contrast to both these interpretations Anthony Fletcher is among those who argue that the outbreak of the English Civil Wars was not inevitable. He maintains that they were the consequence of fortuitous events, the result of ‘the coincidence of hopeless misunderstanding and irreconcilable mistrust with fierce ideological conflict’. They were ‘a curious mixture of folly and idealism’, wars that no one sought.¹⁹³ Yet another contemporary understanding is that provided by Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658) himself who, in addressing the House of Commons, acknowledged that ‘religion was not the thing at first contested for, but God brought it to that issue ... and at last it proved to be that which was most dear to us’.¹⁹⁴

That there was dissension in the Church itself in the earlier decades of the seventeenth century can hardly be denied. As we have seen from our review in Chapter 1, disagreements in the Elizabethan Church have been the subject of intense debate among historians and theologians alike, and much of the discussion has centred on the extent to which Calvinism was the dominant Church system of belief and how far Arminian — or rather anti-Calvinist — doctrines had come into contention. We need at this point to take a deeper look into the cauldron in which these disputes were coming to the boil, the Church in the years that led up to the great divide of the 1660s.

Tyacke is at the forefront of those interpreters whose perception of the English Church at the commencement of the seventeenth century is one of consensus. By the end of Elizabeth I’s reign the effect of the Reformation upon the English Church had been so dramatic that there was an overriding agreement in matters of doctrine, specifically with regard to a shared endorsement of the Genevan reformer Calvin. Predestination is perceived to be the core Calvinist doctrine, with Tyacke claiming that:

¹⁹³ Fletcher, *Outbreak*, pp.415 and 418

¹⁹⁴ Oliver Cromwell, speech to the House of Commons, January 25, 1655/6. This quotation is cited in part by C. Hill, *God’s Englishman*, p.204 and in full in Burke, *Rhetoric*, p.112

The characteristic theology of English Protestant sainthood was Calvinism, centring on a belief in divine predestination, both double and absolute, whereby man's destiny, either election to Heaven or reprobation to Hell, is not conditioned by faith but depends instead on the will of God.¹⁹⁵

Calvinism, he maintains, 'was the *de facto* religion of the Church of England under Queen Elizabeth and King James'¹⁹⁶ to such effect that, by the start of the seventeenth century, most clergy were Calvinists along with many of the more educated laity. 'Any doubts that the Church of England was doctrinally Calvinist, before Laud took control, can be resolved by reading the extant doctoral theses in divinity from the 1580s to the 1620s still preserved at Oxford University'.¹⁹⁷ Whether his succinct but brief and selective quotations from these theses can be accepted as evidence that the whole of the English Church was doctrinally Calvinist is open to question. After all, what do we mean by the 'Church of England'? Do we mean the clergy and those who comprised the ecclesiastical structure or do we mean the total sum of all those who adhered to the English Church, including those who occupied the pews?

Hunt is a supporter of Tyacke's position, and he sought to address this question in a recent paper.¹⁹⁸ Hunt's assertion is that there is undeniable evidence that Calvinism was preached from the local pulpit in the Jacobean Church, that it formed a crucial element in the 'gospel' and that there was widespread interest and understanding of Calvinist theology amongst the laity, either in favour of it or in opposition to it. On the latter point he produced two detailed case histories, one from Sleaford and the other from Dorchester, by way of evidence. The case histories Hunt presented certainly substantiate the assertion that Reformed theology was understood by many of the literate middle-ranking men in those localities. The only reservation would be that we need to be convinced that these two examples fairly represent the situation in the whole parish, among both men and women, and more particularly, in parishes nationwide.

Tyacke also has support from Collinson, who finds the argument convincing when it maintains that in a society steeped in Calvinist theology the majority believed 'Calvinism and the religious practice associated with Calvinist belief to be the true orthodoxy'. In the Jacobean Church "Orthodox" meant Calvinist ... in Tyacke's phrase "a common and ameliorating bond" uniting conformists and moderate puritans'.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁵ Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists*, p.1

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.7

¹⁹⁷ Tyacke, *Aspects*, p.133

¹⁹⁸ Hunt, 'Predestination'

¹⁹⁹ Collinson, *Religion of Protestants*, pp.81 and 82

In examining the effects of Calvinist dogma in any period in the early modern English Church it is important that we recall that the doctrine of predestination cannot be equated with Calvinism. It does not, and Calvin would not have accepted that it could.²⁰⁰ As White reminds us, much of the tension in the Church was not between Calvinism and non-Calvinism but about the centrality of predestination within the larger doctrinal whole.²⁰¹ Many who subscribed to Calvin's theology not only held to differing understandings of the precise meaning of predestination, but also questioned whether it was a crucial issue, and whether the preaching of that doctrine was profitable. That the issue is not clear-cut is demonstrated further by White's rejection of any polarity between Arminianism and Calvinism in favour of a spectrum.²⁰²

Tyacke's analysis has its sceptics: Fincham is not altogether convinced by his view that a Calvinist consensus was all pervading the early Stuart English Church. He asserts that from the outset there were serious divisions in the Church in the seventeenth century. 'It was riven with friction and disagreement',²⁰³ and the Church was largely held together by the pragmatic approach of James I who demanded a minimal conformity from Puritans in his attempts to contain the disputes. In a contribution in which he claims to 'nudge the current historiographical debate away from an obsessive preoccupation with one doctrine – predestination' — a helpful move in my view — Fincham directs our attention to a number of other 'contentious issues: conformity, order, worship, clerical authority and wealth, even attitudes towards the Church's own past.' This was a troubled Church which inherited its retained Catholic structure, its cathedrals and Church courts, the *Book of Common Prayer*, and royal resistance to reform.²⁰⁴

Tyacke's reaction to such arguments is to concede that, provided the doctrinal aspect is not lost sight of, this more inclusive understanding is acceptable.²⁰⁵ Writing in 2001 he admits that 'my concentration on the "single issue of predestination" does now seem excessive. Today I would wish to stress more that a nexus of associated orthodoxies were all coming under challenge at the same time'.²⁰⁶

Whether we accept Tyacke's consensus or Fincham's reservations the Jacobean and Caroline Church in England was to receive an unsettling challenge emanating from a rising Conformist intelligentsia, centred on Laud. We must therefore examine this 'Laudian

²⁰⁰ Above, pp.51-52

²⁰¹ White, *Predestination*, p.xii.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, p.xiii

²⁰³ Fincham, 'Introduction', p.11

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.1 and 2

²⁰⁵ Tyacke, *Aspects*, p.13

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p.10

reaction', which A. Tindal Hart suggests 'had a definite threefold purpose: the destruction of Calvinism, the restoration of Catholic Order, and the thorough disciplining of clergy and laity alike'.²⁰⁷

The Laudian epoch

A key feature in Tyacke's thesis is his assertion that the Calvinist consensus came under threat from a rising Arminianism. We have already noted the presence of views, identified by H.C. Porter as *Arminianism avant la lettre*, in the late sixteenth century.²⁰⁸ Tyacke argues that as the seventeenth century progressed, anti-Calvinist teaching was increasingly welcomed in England by a number of Conformists who adapted the doctrines of Arminius to the English context, a variant in which free grace was linked to communal and ritualised worship, and the sacraments.²⁰⁹ Hubert Cunliffe-Jones qualifies this assertion, suggesting that the 'anti-Calvinist tendency [in England] in the early seventeenth century probably owes nothing at all to the theology of Jacob Arminius',²¹⁰ and Davies supports his view, maintaining that, whilst anti-Calvinists had reservations about a strict acceptance of predestinarian dogma, their reservations did not necessarily render them Arminians.²¹¹ They might hold to certain tenets that rendered them liable to accusations of Arminianism, such as hypothetical universalism, the view that God elected on the basis of foreseen faith, and the possibility that the elect might fall from grace. To the strict Calvinist these deviations were a denial of Reformed theology, but many, including Laud, rejected any accusation that they were thereby rendered Arminian. Such charges were not uncommon for even the moderate Calvinist Archbishop James Ussher (1581-1656) was accused of being an Arminian. Nevertheless, for Tyacke 'Arminianism' is the 'least misleading' term to 'describe the thrust of change at this time', one which denotes, in this context, 'a coherent body of anti-Calvinist religious thought' amongst those holding a pervasive scepticism about the tenets of Calvinism which were seen as being 'unreasonable'.²¹² He insists, 'it was never my view that Arminianism in England owed much, apart from a name, to its Dutch counterpart ... the whole question of nomenclature has given rise to widespread confusion'.²¹³

²⁰⁷ Tindal Hart, *Country Clergy*, p.86

²⁰⁸ Above, pp.42-43, and Porter, *Reformation*, p.281

²⁰⁹ Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinist*, pp.245-6

²¹⁰ Cunliffe-Jones, *Christian Theology*, p.20

²¹¹ Davies, *Caroline Captivity*, pp.93-95

²¹² Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinist*, p.245

²¹³ Tyacke, *Aspects*, p.11

We shall be examining Archbishop Laud's doctrinal stance,²¹⁴ but he was not the first to entertain doubts regarding all aspects of Calvinist dogma. Even so Tyacke names him as being foremost amongst the Arminians or, more accurately, anti-Calvinists. He asserts that at Laud's instigation, and with royal support, 'predestinarian teaching was forthwith forbidden'²¹⁵ and, in so doing, he effectively categorised those advocating Reformed soteriology as a political threat. But was the subject banned because it was thought to be theologically erroneous or because it was considered controversial, thereby — allegedly — disturbing the peace of the Church? It is Davies's view that in the 'Caroline' reaction,

there took place after 1625 not a proscription of Calvinism ... but an attempt to excise its rigid predestinarian offshoots, above all the doctrine of reprobation and its antinomian tendencies. The opinion that Calvinism was proscribed after 1625 also rests on an over-optimistic expectation of (and misreading of the purpose of) central edicts. Moreover recent work on sermons, catechisms, and censorship during the early modern period points to the survival of Calvinism within Anglicanism during the 1630s. The charged anti-reformed atmosphere of the Caroline Church certainly created a climate which could promote the growth of Arminian ideas, as well as other heterodoxies.²¹⁶

For whatever reason the evangelical Calvinist mainstream, by the 1630s, had come to be considered unorthodox and subversive to authority.²¹⁷ On the reverse side of the coin, among the 'godly', the Laudian policies aroused suspicions of Catholicism and Arminianism, resulting in deep opposition, the more so when Laud, again with the backing of the sovereign, elevated suspected Arminians in the Church hierarchy. These measures were perceived as being an enhancement of the priestly standing, an attempt by Laud thereby to enforce conformity to his dramatic changes in the nature and form of church worship at parish level.

Tyacke's assertion that a rising Laudian Arminian influence was a factor in the years leading up to the Civil Wars, a threat to both the Jacobean consensus and the Puritan cause, is far from enjoying unanimous endorsement. There is a vociferous body of opinion, including White, Davies, Kevin Sharpe, and Bernard that would dispute the view that Calvinism, and the challenge to Calvinism by Laudian 'Arminianism' were such dominant issues at all. Sharpe, who in his magisterial thousand page book *The Personal Rule of Charles I* makes only two small direct references to Tyacke, maintains that the thesis of an Arminian revolution requires further investigation and qualification. He considers that recent scholarship in ecclesiastical history has obscured rather than clarified the policies of the

²¹⁴ Below, pp.109-121

²¹⁵ Tyacke, 'Puritanism', p.133

²¹⁶ Davies, *Caroline Captivity*, p.298

²¹⁷ Spurr, *Puritanism*, p.11

king and his bishops, and he further argues that the seventeenth-century 'spectre of doctrinal Arminianism was out of all proportion to the reality'.²¹⁸

As against Sharpe's measured arguments Bernard, in a particularly forceful approach, has sought to refute the contention that the Church was ever predominantly predestinarian in this period. He complains that Tyacke's characterisation of the Church of England fails to take account of the monarchical character of the Elizabethan and Jacobean Church in which the policy was to hold together a religiously divided society and Church. He maintains that Calvinist views had little practical relevance for bishops. There was a gulf, in this estimation, between the high points of theology and the day-to-day running of Church and state: what went on in the parishes was far removed from the theological debates in higher circles.²¹⁹ Tyacke's failure is considered the more serious when special attention is given by him to the very theological controversies those rulers were intent on subduing.²²⁰ Noting that Bernard 'always had a distinctive historical methodology', Ethan Shagan nonetheless concedes that historians do tend to 'read conflict, faction and conspiracy into sources that contain no such things', hence Bernard's 'series of bold revisions of conventional wisdom' in which he argues that historians should be paying closer attention to what the documents are actually saying.²²¹

As for Davies, it is his conviction that 'there never was any question of Arminianism replacing Calvinism' in the Caroline Church.²²² He takes the view that, with some exceptions, there remained a general acceptance of predestination as biblical and rooted in the doctrine of the Church. In Jacobean England it was possible to believe in election without believing in a systematic doctrine of predestination; to be 'Reformed' did not necessarily mean to be Calvinist.²²³ There were widespread differences as to what was meant by the term: at what point was predestination decreed and in what way: is it absolute or conditional, dependent on foresight or not? What was generally under attack was predestination to reprobation, that is, a rejection of rigid double predestination.²²⁴ Given these diverse understandings, the question has to be considered, at what point does a doctrinal interpretation render it Arminian in all but name? Davies makes the valid point that, after all, 'only at the cost of great distortion can divines be placed within closed categories of Arminian and Calvinist'.

²¹⁸ Sharpe, *Personal Rule*, pp.275-276, and 296

²¹⁹ Bernard, 'Church of England', pp.195-196

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.191-193

²²¹ Shagan, 'Review', pp.889-891

²²² Davies, *Caroline Captivity*, pp.298-299

²²³ *Ibid.*, pp.88-89

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.92-93, and p.98

Charles I, Davies argues, was neither Calvinist nor Arminian: he was ‘quintessentially and self-consciously Caroline’,²²⁵ a term which James B. McSwain notes summarises Davies’s definition of Charles’s notions of sacramental kingship and divine right rule, which the king is said to have defended by means of ceremonialism designed to offset lay claims and Puritan plots.²²⁶ Charles had no interest in academic theology and his policy was to neutralise doctrinal controversy, whilst his authoritarianism and paranoia about loyalty led to his obsessive fear of Puritan inspired conspiracies.²²⁷ In the process of undermining the Jacobean consensus he radicalised a Puritan stance that was not particularly critical of the ‘Anglican’ Church, and this provided a preparation for the post-Restoration Anglicanism from which Nonconformity was doctrinally and ecclesiastically alienated.²²⁸ As for Laud, his concern, in Davies’s view, was the preservation of the liturgy, discipline and the reverential worship of the Church. Things were getting out of hand, radicalism was the menace, and his crusade was to bring the Church in its affairs and worship back to decency and holy order. He further maintains that the mark of the Caroline Church was not its spirituality but its political ideology and practice which, when put into long-term effect, resulted in its opposition to any Anglican moderating compromise, and thence to a purging of Nonconformity, most notably after 1660. Any semblance of a Hookerian *via media* was, with the passage of time, lost as it evolved into the ‘rigid and stultifying strait-jacket’ that not only drove out the Nonconformists but also ‘eventually orphaned its Methodist offspring’.²²⁹ The divisions that arose between ‘Anglican’ and Puritan were the result of an authoritarian attempt to restrict the free expression of Evangelical and Reformed practice by enforcing conformity, not the outcome of Puritan rejection of a rising Arminian theology. This is Davies’s perception.

Tyacke refutes Davies’s ‘Caroline’ thesis, as we are about to see, but in the context of the events of 1662 there is strength in the assertion that division arose out of the intransigent enforcement of both doctrine and practice. On the one side, dogmatism in the form of a ‘rigid and stultifying’ requirement to conform was set against an inflexible insistence on reform on the other, requirements which were to result in the dividing of the Church on doctrinaire assertions.

Turning to White, he is ever the advocate of a spectrum of doctrinal views in our period, and he is certain that ‘the religious tensions of 1640-42 had little to do with the doctrine of

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.12

²²⁶ McSwain, ‘Review’, p.1011

²²⁷ Davies, *Caroline Captivity*, p.12

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.13, and 289

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.6

predestination'.²³⁰ In his view the alleged 'rise of Arminianism' was nothing more than a Puritan perception, albeit sincere.²³¹ There was no simple dichotomy in place, and he is reluctant to offer us simple definitions.²³² He argues that too much emphasis is centred on predestination. He further claims that the prominence of this doctrine 'fails to do justice to the rich complexity of Calvinism ... and it ignores other doctrines arguably more important, such as the nature of the church, and concepts of doctrinal authority'.²³³ Shaun F. Hughes, in a review of White's book, goes so far as to argue that there is much to be said for abandoning the term 'Calvinism' except in reference to the thought of Calvin, replacing it instead with designations such as 'the Reformed tradition'.²³⁴

Tyacke's responses to these arguments appear in reprints of his essays in *Aspects*, a book in which he confronts his critics head on. Tyacke is highly critical of attempts by sympathetic historians to underwrite a conservative English or 'Anglican' interpretation of religious reform, expressed in terms of a 'so-called *via media*' that denies the radicalism of the Reformation and, in so doing, 'rewrites the past in the light of the present'.²³⁵ This party line approach is now receiving support, he argues, from certain revisionist historians who are pressing into service the 'old idea' that the English Church epitomises a mean between extremes of Protestantism and Catholicism.²³⁶ Typical is Bernard who is seen as an exaggerated example of this old-style 'Anglican' apologetic. Tyacke complains that Bernard defines the nature of the English Reformation, encapsulated in his notion of a 'monarchical Church', as a jurisdictional break with Rome, and not of the 'ensuing religious changes that mattered'.²³⁷ Bernard is presenting a politically driven 'Anglican' middle way that has the effect of abolishing Protestantism from the record.

Tyacke maintains that White, 'the leading spokesman for the 'Anglican' wing of the revisionist alliance', is wrong to advocate a spectrum of views on the doctrine of predestination. He is certain that by the 1590s 'Calvinism was dominant in the highest reaches of the Established Church'.²³⁸ He cites in support the evidence of the licensed publications of the period and he identifies a number of such publications as clearly dominated by predestinarian theology.²³⁹ He further notes that the period saw a succession

²³⁰ White, *Predestination*, p.312

²³¹ White, 'Rejoinder', p.218

²³² *Ibid.*, p.225

²³³ White, *Predestination*, p.xii

²³⁴ Hughes, 'Review' p.405

²³⁵ Tyacke, *Aspects*, p.176

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.176

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, p.177

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, p.180, and pp.160-161

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.161-164

of archbishops and bishops who were Calvinists, including Whitgift, Richard Bancroft (*bap.* 1544-1610) and Abbot, and that the official teachings at Oxford and Cambridge remained dominantly Calvinist.²⁴⁰ Tyacke considers that White's attempts to reaffirm the 'Anglican' middle way are flawed by the way he privileges his own conception of a doctrinal *via media*. He avers that White's definition of Arminianism is so opaque as to leave us unable effectively to judge his allegations and he complains that White's analysis of the views he seeks to discredit is 'careless'.²⁴¹

Tyacke is not at all impressed either with the 'Anglican' standpoint adopted by Davies and his attempt to establish the concept of a distortion of Anglicanism by Charles I. Davies presents a challenging but 'deeply flawed political interpretation of religious change in terms of something called "Carolinism",' a concept which Tyacke considers dubious, and which receives a perfunctory rejection.²⁴² He appears to reserve judgement on Sharpe, considering it premature to deliver his final verdict on Sharpe's contribution. His book is rather cryptically referred to as likely to become 'like some beached leviathan, stranded by the receding tides of revisionism'.²⁴³

Not every interpretation considers Laud's policies always to have been contentious. Paul Avis, in his work on the evolving theological perspectives within the Church of England, maintains that even under Laud the 'Anglican consensus' was more tolerant than is sometimes depicted. As evidence he argues that, whilst inter-communion was not always encouraged, there remained in the English Church an acceptance of the validity of continental Lutheran and Reformed ministries up to 1662. Both Andrewes and John Cosin (1594-1672) had argued that, whilst continental Protestant ministries might not be rightly – that is episcopally – ordained they were neither deficient in divine grace nor invalid in their ministry and in the celebration of the sacraments. Prior to 1660, Avis argues, 'there were no barriers to those canonically — but not episcopally — ordained among the Lutherans and the Reformed being licensed to minister in the Church of England'.²⁴⁴ But, this analysis is not universally endorsed. Anthony Milton voices a counter argument when he highlights a number of significant tensions between the English Church and the Protestant Churches on the Continent both in terms of doctrine and practice.²⁴⁵

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.164

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p.181

²⁴² *Ibid.*, p.190

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp.193-194

²⁴⁴ Avis, *Anglicanism*, p.81

²⁴⁵ Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, pp.377-395

The Puritan ascendancy

The 1640s and 1650s are acknowledged to have been years of Puritan supremacy. Laudian innovations were rejected in Parliament, resulting in the demolition of episcopacy — effectively from early 1643, albeit not legally until October 1646²⁴⁶ — with the bishops thereby dethroned and losing control in the Church. Although never disestablished, the Church of England was nonetheless increasingly under the control of the Puritan gentry at Westminster, a situation unacceptable to Conformist thought: how can it be tolerable for Church affairs to be ordered by a mixed lay synod?

But Puritanism was divided, manifesting itself in various guises, on occasion evidencing unity of doctrine but deeply divided as to how doctrine was to be made effective in Church life and structure. The Puritans' primary concerns had now moved from disquiet about Arminian doctrine to debates about Church governance and discipline. With episcopal oversight abandoned, who was to hold authority in the local parish? Was the Presbytery to have power over the parish minister and its lay eldership or was the local Church independent and sovereign in its own affairs? Having pleaded for toleration of their own position in the past, were they now prepared to grant like toleration to other 'tender consciences', whether conservative Conformist, Roman Catholic, Independent, or radical Separatist? Morrill asserts that, in the midst of cries for 'liberty', 'the period 1640-6 was dominated by Presbyterian assaults on Anglicanism, 1646-53 by Independent assaults on Presbyterianism, and 1653-60 by sectarian assaults on Congregationalism and central tenets of Calvinism'.²⁴⁷ Little regard was being shown for the liberty of conscience for others. What powers were to be granted to the magistrate, appointed through Parliament, to exercise over religious affairs? With Puritans enjoying the fruits of power, consistency on many of these questions was not proving to be their strength. In a debate on the abolition of episcopacy, George Digby, Earl of Bristol (1612-1677), argued to Parliament on February 9, 1640/1, 'I am confident that instead of every bishop we should put down in a diocese, we should erect a pope in each parish,'²⁴⁸ and in so saying he endorsed John Milton's renowned assertion that the 'New Presbyter is but Old Priest writ Large'.²⁴⁹

The Westminster Assembly — the general synod of judicious divines, with some lay involvement, called by Parliament — met from the summer of 1643 for the purpose of agreeing a reformation of doctrine, liturgy, and Church government.²⁵⁰ In the first two

²⁴⁶ Morrill, 'Church in England', pp.92-93

²⁴⁷ Morrill, 'Puritan Revolution', p.68

²⁴⁸ Digby, *Third Speech*, p.17, cited by Shaw in Shaw, *History*, I, p.32

²⁴⁹ Milton, 'New Forcers'

²⁵⁰ The proceedings and debates at the Assembly are detailed in Bolam, *et al.*, *English Presbyterians*, pp.38-42

intents it met with some success, largely because of Parliament's careful selection of the participants for their doctrinal consensus. Any likelihood of division on doctrine was eliminated before the divines even began their deliberations but, whilst there was soteriological unity, there was major ecclesiological disunity.²⁵¹ As a result the Assembly succeeded in producing the *Directory for ... Publique Worship* and the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (1647), with the intention that the former should replace the *Book of Common Prayer*, a resolve, as Morrill has demonstrated, which proved difficult to implement.²⁵² But in spite of years of wrangling no agreement was found at the Assembly on the process of reforming Church governance. A. Harold Wood argues that it was the Independents who were responsible for this disunity, with their insistence on the right of congregations to ordain or choose their own ministers, and their requirement that congregations should be free from Presbyterian classical control. The Presbyterians are also blamed for their intolerance: for them there could be no settlement that would allow separations from the proposed Presbyterian national Church. If toleration had been permitted then it could well have been that the cause of diocesan episcopacy would have permanently failed, but by their division and intolerance the Puritans sealed their own fate, 'their last stroke of folly'.²⁵³ It was this bitter disagreement between Presbyterians and Independents, supported respectively by Parliament and the New Model Army, which resulted, in spite of empowering parliamentary Ordinances,²⁵⁴ in a failure to establish a fully functioning Presbyterian system nationwide. The only provinces to establish anything approaching a functional Presbyterian system were Cheshire, Essex, Lancashire, Middlesex, Shropshire, Somerset, Suffolk and Surrey, plus London. Twenty-four counties made no response to the requirements at all.²⁵⁵ George Ross Abernathy maintains that in 1648 Presbyterian ministers in the country numbered 1,000-1,200, nowhere near enough to sustain a fully operating Presbyterian church.²⁵⁶

In a society possessing no concept of religious pluralism, but which permitted — whilst entertaining little sympathy for — the practice of alternative beliefs, it is broadly possible to identify at least six religious groups in England during this period, divided into self-defining

²⁵¹ Kendall, *Calvin*, pp.184-185

²⁵² See below, p.84

²⁵³ Wood, *Church Unity*, pp.89 and 94

²⁵⁴ 'The Ordinance for taking away the Book of Common Prayer and putting in Execution the Directory for the Publique Worship of God', is dated January 4, 1644/5: Firth and Rait, *Acts*, I, pp.582-607. 'The Ordinance regulating the Election of Elders' is dated August 9, 1645: *Ibid.*, pp.749-753. Others followed.

²⁵⁵ Abernathy, 'English Presbyterians', p.7, and Morrill, 'Church in England', p.97

²⁵⁶ Abernathy, 'English Presbyterians', p.7

and self-contained categories apart, that is, from Roman Catholics, ‘atheists’,²⁵⁷ and those who gave the appearance of holding to no religious convictions, the indifferent. This burgeoning spectrum was encouraged by a culture that, in varying degrees, permitted the freedom of expression evidenced by a huge increase in the publication of pamphlets and books. As Thomas Fulton has noted,

with the breakdown of censorship, the production of books and especially pamphlets exploded. The number of titles printed in England in 1641 was 2042, more than three times the number produced in 1639. More books and pamphlets were printed in 1642, during the English Civil War, than in the five-year period prior to 1639.²⁵⁸

In the religious categories that resulted from this liberty of expression we have at one extreme the consistently Laudian clergy, relatively small in number, keeping for the most part a low profile with some preferring exile, but who were jointly clarifying and intensifying their High-Church position. Clerics such as Hammond and Taylor, whose stance we shall be examining in more detail in Chapter 4, Gilbert Sheldon (1598-1677), Brian Duppa (1588-1662), and Matthew Wren (1585-1667), were amongst those who were destined to play a crucial role in the failure of the Restoration Settlement to include moderate Presbyterian ministers. This ‘makeshift alliance’ is identified by Fincham and Tyacke not only as a source of resistance but as a centre for a revival of Laudian influence in their defence of episcopacy and the Prayer Book and their refusal to be ‘absorbed into a broad homogenous “Anglicanism”, [thereby] remaining an identifiable grouping within the English church’.²⁵⁹ They were to receive support in their endeavours from exiled royalist clerics such as Cosin and George Morley (1598?-1684).

Then there were the traditional Conformists, sometimes identified as ‘Prayer Book Protestants’, both lay and clerical. They were conservative members of the established Church, the inheritors of ‘Conformity’, usually classified as neither Laudian nor Puritan, remaining loyal to the Church of the Elizabethan Settlement, its forms of worship and its 1559 service book. Not always easy to distinguish, it was this group, identified by Morrill as ‘the passive strength of Anglican survivalism’, that would also become a significant challenge to Puritan dominance,²⁶⁰ a group which Judith Maltby maintains was always evident in the early Stuart Church.²⁶¹ Whilst many rejected Laudian ceremonialism they remained dedicated to the *Book of Common Prayer* and, whilst having reservations about

²⁵⁷ Used in the sense of a rejection of a belief in ‘God’. In the seventeenth century the word covered a wide variety of heterodox beliefs.

²⁵⁸ Fulton, *Cultures of Print*, p.12

²⁵⁹ Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, p.284

²⁶⁰ Morrill, ‘Church in England’, p.91

²⁶¹ Maltby, ‘*Temple to Synagogue*’, pp.93-94

some members of the episcopate, nonetheless wished to retain episcopacy. Her concern is to treat Conformists with the same seriousness as is afforded by historians to the ‘godly’²⁶² and, she argues, we should ‘be more critical of the ‘godly’s’ [own] assessment of the quality of the religious lives of their conforming neighbours’.²⁶³ This is a view which an examination of Conformist spirituality in this thesis endorses.²⁶⁴

Many such Conformists lost their livings. A.G. Matthews, a nineteenth-century Congregational minister, made a revision²⁶⁵ of a contemporary ‘exaggerated’ analysis of their numbers, published by the ‘High-Church Tory rector’, John Walker (1674-1747),²⁶⁶ a modification which estimated that there were 2,425 sequestrations — out of a total of about 8,600 English rectories and vicarages — in the 1640s and 1650s, that is ejections from benefices by parliamentary or Cromwellian authorities, many at the hands of county committees and the central Committee for Plundered Ministers.²⁶⁷ I. M. Green argues that the disparity in the results was largely due to the nature of the evidence available to them and, whilst acknowledging that Matthews’s work was a ‘model of scholarship and succinctness’, he further revises the numbers to include lecturers, assistants, curates and resignations, calculating the figure at 2,780.²⁶⁸ John Packer goes even further and estimates that, to include those expelled from the cathedrals, collegiate churches and universities, the number should be around 3,600,²⁶⁹ a group reduced thereby ‘to a condition of extreme destitution and suffering’.²⁷⁰ These men were ejected either for non-residence, their failure to conform to the revised liturgy, their alleged scandalous or malignant lifestyle (that is deficient in either their way of life or their doctrine), their Royalist or Laudian sympathies, or because of their refusal to take the Solemn League and Covenant (1643). It is Anne Whiteman’s view that ‘it would be totally wrong to think that they were persecuted with the determination and efficiency of a modern totalitarian state. The policy of successive governments towards them fluctuated between occasional severity and general mildness, but was at no time really thorough in its repression’.²⁷¹ Green argues that the persecution was not a direct confrontation between Puritan and ‘Anglican’. The attacks arose from a variety of motives taking place at national, county, and parish levels. As a result the

²⁶² Maltby, ‘Petitions’, pp.105-106. See also, Maltby, *Prayer Book*, pp.2, 84, and 233

²⁶³ Maltby, ‘By this book’, p.274

²⁶⁴ See Chapter 4

²⁶⁵ Matthews, *Walker Revised*

²⁶⁶ Green, ‘Persecution’, p.507, and Walker, *Attempt*

²⁶⁷ Green, ‘Persecution’, pp.515-518, and 522

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.507-508

²⁶⁹ Packer, *Transformation*, p.11

²⁷⁰ Bosher, *Restoration Settlement*, p.5

²⁷¹ Whiteman, ‘Restoration’, pp.28-33

discrimination varied from area to area; the geographical pattern of persecution varied considerably.²⁷² The principal motivation was the desire to remove from ministry 'non-resident' and insufficient clergy. Significantly, those charged with teaching Arminian doctrine were relatively few, though rather more, proportionately, were accused of Laudian ceremonial practices.²⁷³ Morrill maintains that Cromwell introduced no legislation to prevent men and women from worshipping as they wished. He winked at the widespread use of stripped-down versions of prayer-book services whilst theology of which he disapproved was permitted publication; Arminian belief was left undisturbed.²⁷⁴

In spite of the purges 70-75% 'of all parish ministers remained in possession of their benefices until their death or the Restoration'.²⁷⁵ It was this conservative group that was to be the mainstay of the continuing Church of England and which, regardless of all attempts to dismantle it, survived every attack. In just a few years its episcopacy and Church courts had been abolished, the *Book of Common Prayer* was prohibited, many of its cathedrals and churches despoiled and vandalised, and hundreds of its clergy were removed. Yet it survived because of conservatism in the parish where, throughout these years, ministry was sustained, often little changed, and it survived under the protection of the landed gentry who considered the parish to be the bastion of public order.²⁷⁶ For Morrill the attempt to eradicate 'Anglican' worship in the 1640s was a miserable failure. The 'Anglicans' did not publicise their defiance, but defy they did, and Morrill's research indicates that fewer than 25% of parishes purchased the prescribed *Directory for ... Publique Worship* and in the majority of churches the established pattern for the celebration of holy communion remained unchanged. This stubborn liturgical resistance, Morrill claims, was to persist until the Restoration.²⁷⁷

The third category was the Presbyterians who were dominant in Parliament though not in the country and they held high hopes that at last their time to achieve a fully Reformed Church had arrived. But their aspirations for the formation of a unified national Presbyterian Church in England were thwarted not only by their widespread unpopularity but, more seriously in their own minds, by the activities of the fourth group, the Independents. Whilst remaining a largely semi-separatist element, Independents at the Assembly resisted and, assisted by the strength of the army, prevented the wholesale

²⁷² Green, 'Persecution', pp.509 and 522

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, p.511

²⁷⁴ Morrill, 'Puritan Revolution', p.83

²⁷⁵ Spurr, *Restoration Church*, pp.6-7

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.3-4

²⁷⁷ Morrill, 'Church in England', pp.91-107

formation of a Presbyterian Church settlement in the 1640s. It was this group that eventually held power under Cromwell and the Protectorate. The Nonconformists from these two categories will also be the subject of more detailed investigation in this study, including the major contribution of Owen, the Independent divine and friend of Cromwell, and the ejected Nonconformist, Baxter.²⁷⁸

A fifth group, of particular interest in the context of this thesis, are those who came to be known as the 'Reconcilers', described by Baxter as the 'greater Number of the Nonconformists, ... of no Sect or Party, but abhorring the very Name of Parties'. They 'like what is good in Episcopal, Presbyterians, or Independents, but reject somewhat as evil in them all'.²⁷⁹ By 1653, concerned about the religious confusion, disunity, intolerance, and the lack of co-ordinated control in the English parishes, Baxter formed the Worcestershire Association, a voluntary alliance of ministers in the county, 'all agreed on the same Course, even to unite in the practice of so much of Discipline as the Episcopal, Presbyterians, and Independents are agreed in, and as crosseth none of their Principles'.²⁸⁰ Out of the one-hundred and twelve parishes in the county fifty-six ministers participated, meeting regularly for theological discussion, prayer, fellowship, and admonition.²⁸¹ The movement spread as 'a great desire of Concord began to possess all good People in the Land, and our Breaches seem'd ready to heal'. Ministers in other counties 'began to take the Business into consideration'²⁸² and the Worcester Association inspired the formation of like alliances in at least fourteen counties: Cambridgeshire (thirty ministers), Cheshire, Cornwall (twenty-six), Cumberland, Devon, Dorset, Essex, Hampshire, Norfolk (eighty), Nottinghamshire (over thirty), Shropshire, Somerset, Westmorland, and Wiltshire.²⁸³

Finally, there were the increasingly radical religious elements in society who were usually, but not always, prepared to separate from the national Church. Encouraged by freedom of expression and greater toleration, these groups included not only the wholly separated Independents, the Quakers and the Baptists, both Particular and General, but also a plethora of radical sects including the Muggletonians, the Ranters, Fifth Monarchists, and Familists. However, as Morrill argues, probably no more than 5% of the population attended religious assemblies other than those associated with the parish churches.²⁸⁴

²⁷⁸ See Chapter 5

²⁷⁹ Baxter, *Reliquiae*, p.387

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p.167

²⁸¹ Wood, *Church Unity*, pp.101-102

²⁸² Baxter, *Reliquiae*, p.167

²⁸³ Wood, *Church Unity*, p.103

²⁸⁴ Morrill, 'Church in England', p.90

Morrill identifies one further category of more ambivalent intellectuals who deplored what they considered the bigotry and violence of Puritanism in its various forms. Displaying an Erastian spirit in religion — practical, rational, sceptical and tolerant — they eschewed dogmatic precision in favour of moral considerations and as such they are seen as heirs of Renaissance Humanism and precursors of the Enlightenment.²⁸⁵

It was in this crucible that, at the Restoration, attempts were made to reach a religious settlement, efforts which were dominated by authorities both secular and ecclesiastical who, on their return to power and influence, sought to impose a settlement based on a single national Church established by statute to the exclusion of all others. Conscience was to be overridden by a requirement to conform to a single Church structure, liturgy, and doctrine.

The Restoration Settlement

In the months immediately following the return of Charles II to England in May 1660 there appeared to be every possibility of reconciliation and an agreed religious settlement. Presbyterians had been at the forefront of the move to restore the monarchy, and Charles himself had declared in favour of the binding of old wounds.²⁸⁶ Both moderate Episcopalians, such as John Gauden (1599/1600-1662) — chaplain to Charles, who was, in 1662, appointed Bishop of Worcester — in conjunction with moderate Presbyterians, following the example of Baxter and Edward Reynolds (1599-1676) — a ‘reconciler’ who was offered, and accepted, the bishopric of Norwich in 1660²⁸⁷ — were moving towards acceptance of a compromise episcopacy in which bishops, with the assistance of presbyters, would have oversight in their dioceses with authority to ordain and censure. The clergy would use the Prayer Book with considerable freedom to omit where conscience demanded. But within two years it became apparent that these aspirations were destined for failure. Why was it that attempts to achieve an inclusive settlement of the Church’s affairs following the Restoration ended in such a dramatic breakdown? After all, as G.R. Cragg reminds us, Conformists ‘were as zealous Protestants as the Puritans, and in time of need both could sink their differences in order to oppose the Papists’.²⁸⁸ The answer to this question we shall be considering in some detail in an extended review of the involvement of institutional authority in the events in the Church in the years immediately

²⁸⁵ Morrill, ‘Introduction’, p.27

²⁸⁶ ‘The Declaration of Breda’, reprinted in Thirsk, *Restoration*, pp.xxii-xxiv

²⁸⁷ Atherton, ‘Reynolds’

²⁸⁸ Cragg, *Puritanism*, p.2

following the Restoration.²⁸⁹ What follows here is intended to provide a background to those events in order that we might better appreciate the evidence we shall be following.

Among the population at large, Coffey argues, the contest that resulted in the split in the Church was probably between those more inclined to support the re-imposition of uniformity, and those who favoured the maintenance and extension of toleration.²⁹⁰ But from one perspective the fall-out in 1662 was perhaps predictable. The loyal Conformists had suffered persecution for twenty years and thousands of their clergy had been deprived of their livings. Now the tables were turned and many were in no mood for appeasement. 'The vindictiveness which crept into much of the early Restoration persecution of dissenters was the result of suffering in their past'.²⁹¹ Many of the gentry, hitherto among the most influential supporters of moderate puritan reform, had been appalled to witness puritan millenarian zeal in the 1640s, and the attacks unleashed against moderate parish clergy. At the Restoration it was the gentry who now gave support to the restoration of the Church at parish level and through their representatives in the Cavalier Parliament.²⁹² After fifteen years or more of oppression the pre-Civil War Church of England had survived, its continued existence all the more remarkable given the widespread unpopularity of Laud's campaign against Puritanism. Yet survive it had and once more it was the major force to be reckoned with. Already, by July 1660, Pepys was complaining of a cold sermon from Duppa at Whitehall Chapel, and the overdone ceremonies, which did not please him.²⁹³

There is a further explanation for in the exploration of the diverse religious responses to the events of the 1640s and 1650s it is apparent that it was the 'longstanding complexities and contradistinctions within Puritanism itself', as Hughes describes them,²⁹⁴ set against an increasing polarity among those sympathetic to the old Church, that were to become major causes of the break up of the Church in 1662. The Puritans were unable to present a unified case yet, having argued for tolerance in the early seventeenth century, they had raised deep resentment towards their cause by their own intolerance. As the contemporary historian Gilbert Burnet (1643-1715), Bishop of Salisbury 1689-1715), was to remark:

I am sorry that I must confess, that all the parties among us, have shewed, that as their turn came to be uppermost, they have forgot the same Principles of Moderation and Liberty which they all claimed when they were oppressed.²⁹⁵

²⁸⁹ See Chapter 8

²⁹⁰ Coffey, *Persecution and Toleration*, p.166

²⁹¹ Craig, 'Growth of Puritanism', p.2. See also Coffey, *Persecution and Toleration*, p.167

²⁹² Green, 'Persecution', p.531

²⁹³ Pepys, *Diary*, I, p.210

²⁹⁴ Hughes, 'Religion', p.351

²⁹⁵ Burnet, *Apology*, p.2

The truth of that statement became apparent at the Restoration when past Puritan intolerance was to prove a major cause of their own undoing as control was once again in the hands of those they had persecuted. As Taylor argued:

There are very many men amongst us who are not content that you permit them [the Presbyterians]; for they will not permit you, but rule over your faith, and say that their way is not only true, but necessary; and therefore the Truth of God is at stake, ... they preach for Toleration when themselves are under the rod, who when they got the rod into their own hands thought Toleration it self to be Intolerable.²⁹⁶

Morrill claims that ‘religious commitment is best observed in conditions of persecution’,²⁹⁷ and the intolerance of Puritanism resulted in a traditional groundswell of opposition. Hughes, in a chapter on popular Presbyterianism, notes Morrill’s contention that zealous interregnum Presbyterianism was far from popular: it was over-demanding in its intellectual requirements, forbidding in its high Calvinism, exclusionary and inaccessible to most parishioners. They were, he argues, a decidedly unpopular minority.²⁹⁸ Elsewhere, in a not altogether sympathetic assessment of the impact of Puritanism, Morrill asserts that

the panzer divisions of English Puritanism came up against some wily guerrillas enjoying widespread popular support. Far from being treated as patriots and liberators, the puritan hot-gosplers were confronted by widespread non-co-operation and foot dragging.²⁹⁹

Imposed change coupled with intolerance from whatever perspective is a form of persecution in any age: it fosters reaction and rarely succeeds. The enforced changes of the 1640s were reluctantly and only partially implemented in the parishes. By comparison the return to Prayer Book conformity in 1660, Morrill maintains, was widely and spontaneously received.³⁰⁰

In the event it was the stringent and intolerant requirements of the 1662 Act of Uniformity, a statute that rejected compromise — an attempt, as Spurr describes it, ‘to cram the lid back on Pandora’s box’³⁰¹ — which proved intolerable to approaching 2,000 clergy. They in their turn were now deprived of their livings, most of them never to return to ministry in the national Church they had no desire to leave. These men were not Dissenters. It might appear that they fall into the same category, but it was not their desire to establish separate congregations. Spurr maintains that they had little in common with Dissent, indeed ‘learned university-educated and conservative Presbyterian ministers shared

²⁹⁶ Taylor, *Via Intelligentiae*, p.9

²⁹⁷ Morrill, *Nature*, p.150

²⁹⁸ Hughes, “‘Popular’ Presbyterianism”, p.236, reviewing Morrill’s argument in Morrill, ‘Church in England’.

²⁹⁹ Morrill, ‘Impact’, p.57

³⁰⁰ Morrill, ‘The Church in England’, p.92

³⁰¹ Spurr, ‘Religion’, p.427

nothing with Baptist ex-soldiers or wandering Quaker preachers'.³⁰² They saw themselves as reluctant Nonconformists, suffering ejection from the body they still considered the only legitimate Church. For Burnet the loss was a tragedy:

Here were many men, much valued ... who were now cast out ignominiously, reduced to great poverty, provoked by much spiteful usage, and cast upon those popular practices that both their principles and circumstances seemed to justify, of forming separate congregations.³⁰³

Not all those lacking episcopal ordination refused to subscribe. Fincham and Stephen Taylor have observed that ordinations in the extraordinary summer of 1662 were greatly increased. This could have been for a number of reasons but they were bound to have included men accepting the requirement for a reordination process. Indeed, they have discovered that in the years 1660-1662 the number of ordinations were five times the totals during the 1670s.³⁰⁴

From the standpoint of the uncompromising Conformist it was the unity of the Church that was of paramount concern. In his will Cosin condemned

all the modern fautors of the same heresies, sectaries and fanatics, who, ... do falsely give out they are inspired by God ... the new Independents and Presbyterians ... men hurried away with the spirit of malice, disobedience and sedition, who ... have of late committed so many great and execrable crimes, to the contempt and despite of Religion, and the Christian Faith: which ... without horror cannot be spoken or mentioned.³⁰⁵

Nonconformists might maintain that it is faithfulness to the Word of God, not the presence of bishops, that is the test of the true Church, but the establishment was insistent: faithful churchmanship required acceptance of the rule of bishops, divinely instituted and thereby holding a God-given right to spiritual oversight. Those refusing to subscribe had placed themselves outside God's established authority and therefore outside the true Church. The Nonconformist stance placed its followers in jeopardy, they were a danger to true religion and they were guilty of undermining political stability and national security.³⁰⁶

What appears to have been at stake in the negotiations was the nature of the Church's government: was it to be full episcopacy, modified episcopacy,³⁰⁷ or Presbyterian? With regard to liturgy and ceremonial, what forms would these take and were the prescriptions to be enforced? What of the sequestrated livings, were they to be restored? What was to happen regarding the non-episcopal ordinations of the past two decades, would they be

³⁰² Spurr, 'Puritanism', p.238. This, I suggest, is an exaggeration. There would have been agreement between them upon many facets of Christian belief.

³⁰³ Burnet, *History*, vol. I, p.329

³⁰⁴ Fincham and Taylor, 'Ordination', August 28, 2012

³⁰⁵ Cosin, 'Will', pp.13-14

³⁰⁶ Spurr, 'Schism', p.410

³⁰⁷ See reference to the Ussher proposals below, p.90

accepted as valid or would an episcopal ordination be required? What of those who had sworn to the Solemn League and Covenant, would they be required to recant, and when was the settlement to be made and how was it to be enforced? All these questions had to be addressed in the knowledge that, whatever the final arrangement, there was bound to be considerable frustration, disappointment and bitterness resulting.³⁰⁸

It is not as if there had been no grounds for compromise. Whilst from the outset there was little doubt that a post-Restoration Church settlement would see a re-establishment of episcopacy, central to negotiations, such as those at the Worcester House conference of Anglican and Presbyterian clergy held in September 1660, was a suggested structure for Church government based upon Ussher's model of reduced episcopacy, first proposed by him in 1640/1, although they were not published until 1656, after his death, as *The Reduction Of Episcopacie*.³⁰⁹ Ussher was a scholarly moderate Calvinist who through his writings had a considerable posthumous influence on the negotiations of the 1660s. His view — for which he claimed the support of St. Paul and the early Church in the writings of Ignatius and Tertullian — was that the bishop and the 'rest of the dispensers of Word and Sacrament joyned in the Common Government of the Church'. Presbyters should 'rule with him', and the bishop should hear 'no man's cause without the presence of ... Clergy'.³¹⁰ In debates over episcopacy Baxter, a crucial figure for the Puritan cause, initially supported the Ussher model of moderate episcopacy, but the critical element for moderate Presbyterians was that bishops should ordain and discipline with the consent, not just with the assistance, of their advising clergy. But as Michael Brydon has shown, on the other side of the fence limited episcopacy proved to be an unacceptable proposition to the resurgent triumphalist Church party, and he demonstrates how 'Hooker rapidly became indispensable to the maintenance of the recently established *status quo*'. Even Hooker's assertion that disputed practices were matters indifferent was conveniently forgotten as loyalists insisted that these 'givens were defended by Hooker'.³¹¹

Negotiations having failed, for the ejected ministers the subsequent events were distressing in the extreme. A study by David J. Appleby has highlighted the neglect by historians of the post-Restoration Nonconformist literature by comparison with their enthusiasm for radical contributions during the 'English Revolution'. In an attempt to rectify this imbalance, he has researched the 'Bartholomean oeuvre', and in particular the

³⁰⁸ Whiteman, 'Restoration', pp.52-55

³⁰⁹ Ussher, *Reduction*, *passim*

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.154-155

³¹¹ Brydon, *Evolving Reputation*, pp.94-95

abundant evidence provided by the farewell sermons of the ejected ministers, most of them preached in the few weeks between the passing of the Uniformity Act and their sequestration on St. Bartholomew's day. Appleby maintains that 'the Bartholomean oeuvre [or corpus] is central to the study of the Restoration religious settlement, providing a suitable entry point through which to explore the interaction between religion and politics'.³¹² Appleby's input we shall be scrutinising.³¹³

It is of note that few of the concerns we have identified appear to relate to concepts of theology, faith, ethics, or the religious way of life yet, in my view, the issues are inseparable. My argument will be that it was the power of religious ideas which was the foundation upon which these convictions about church government, ministerial legitimacy, liturgy, and ceremonial were built. Dogma was the driving force behind the applied ideals which were at the centre of the debates, and without the divergent doctrinal beliefs there would have been little incentive to divide on practicalities. This proposition I shall address as we examine the primary evidence.

But, before we undertake this process, having already explored the context of religious activity in seventeenth-century England as understood by historians, I wish to take account of the nature and development of religious belief in the period as seen from the theologian's perspective.

³¹² Appleby, *Black Bartholomew*, pp.8-9

³¹³ Below, pp.184-191

Chapter 3

Theological Perspectives

For most people *orthodoxy* means right thinking or right opinions, or in other words, “what *we* think,” as opposed to “what *they* think.”

Brian D. McLaren³¹⁴

Scholarly interest in the history of the Christian Church and in the development of Christian doctrine is not confined to historians. Theologians demonstrate considerable awareness of what was happening to Christian belief in the momentous religious developments of the sixteenth century, although interest in the equally significant seventeenth century is rather less apparent. I wish to examine how far the analyses of the evolution of Christian theology conducted by theologians assists us in identifying those developments in the early modern period which give us a better understanding of the division that took place in the English Church after the Restoration?

A significant contribution to our study is to be found in Placher's work. He is a theologian who argues that the seventeenth century saw something of a doctrinal watershed, and he is not convinced that our present day theological perceptions take adequate account of what took place in that century. Modernity, in his view, effectively commenced in the seventeenth century and it was at this point that theology took a 'wrong turn'. He examines the way theology, at the beginning of the modern era, thought of 'God', and he then argues that there developed an increasing confidence in an assumed independent human capacity to understand God and to contribute to human salvation. Placher seeks to contrast the way seventeenth-century theology developed by taking the classic theology of Aquinas, Luther and Calvin, and he uses them as a control group against which to measure modernity's innovations. What is apparent to Placher is that a decreasing emphasis on revelation and grace was evolving which went hand-in-hand with a diminishing attention to the Trinity, manifesting itself in a move towards Christian reflection on a simple unitary perception of God. Transcendence, Placher argues, became 'domesticated', that is, the mystery of the divine became subject to the structures of human reason. Theology sought to define God to suit our own purposes, 'just the sort of idolatry that most directly contrasts with a full respect for divine mystery'.³¹⁵ If Placher is right,

³¹⁴ McLaren, *Orthodoxy*, p.32

³¹⁵ Placher, *Domestication*, pp.2-7

then, in the context of this thesis, we need to discover how far, and why, these innovations impacted upon relationships within the Church.

C.F. Allison also discerns a shift in Christian thinking in the later 1600s. His assessment is that this move was in response to a perceived rise of Antinomianism, a fear which is said to have resulted from the lawless and libertine preaching and practices which were apparent in the 1640s:

The trends in doctrine during the seventeenth century can be understood only in the light of other transitions occurring at the same time. The shaking of the very foundations of established society in the mid-seventeenth century had a profound effect upon the theology produced in the midst of it. The concern about immorality and lawlessness, occasionally expressed under Charles I, grew into a spectre of antinomianism which cast a darker and darker shadow over nearly all the theology written well into Restoration times. Seventeenth-century teaching concerning the Gospel cannot be separated from antinomianism and the fear of it.³¹⁶

Antinomianism is the belief that the Christian believer, now under grace and the chosen recipient, through the atonement, of a full and unconditional redemption from all sin is thereby rendered free from any obligation to keep the divine law. This dogma, David Como has shown, was a reaction to the perceived legalism in Puritan theology, the persistent cry for holiness, the repeated sorrow over sins, and the resultant attempt to fulfil the letter of God's Law and the Ten Commandments. Antinomianism was the 'anti-legal' product of 'underground' religion in the years preceding the Civil Wars, a 'diverse phenomenon without a single point of origin'.³¹⁷ It eventually fuelled a reaction which Allison identifies as a significant move within English Christian theology, a shift centred on Jeremy Taylor. Taylor's theology and spirituality is said to have had a vast influence on seventeenth-century 'Anglican' thought, his *Holy Living* and *Holy Dying* proving particularly popular for more than two centuries.³¹⁸ These later works abandoned, Allison argues, his earlier emphasis on doctrine, espousing in the process an approach which, in literature which was 'profoundly and functionally pastoral, ... rent the fabric of previously held soteriology and split the elements of religion so radically that doctrine became almost irrelevant and ethics became so harsh as to be cruel'.³¹⁹

Along with Taylor, Allison identifies other influential 'second generation Carolines', including Hammond, and Herbert Thorndike (1597-1672) who, together with Baxter from among the Puritans demonstrate, Allison argues, an irresistible

³¹⁶ Allison, *Moralism*, p.194

³¹⁷ Como, *Antinomian Underground*, pp.3 and 45

³¹⁸ Below, p.126

³¹⁹ Allison, *Moralism*, p.192

movement away from the Christian faith of the earlier divines towards a moralism masquerading as faith. The divines who introduced this trend argued a freedom of will in sinners that was of Pelagian proportions. Their remedy for sin consisted largely of exhortations to lead a holy life.³²⁰

Allison further maintains that the only genuine import attached to the atonement in this theological shift was the moral example of Christ, which is an accusation which seems difficult to sustain against Baxter. Their Pelagian soteriology is seen by Allison as logically and inevitably moving through an exemplarist atonement towards the eventual adoption of a Socinian³²¹ deity, and finally from deism to atheism,³²² all of which was bound to cause a reaction from the Nonconformists who insisted on the foundational relevance of orthodox Reformed doctrine.

From among the historians, Spurr also identifies a move within the Restoration Established Church towards the new theological approach, a 'reorientation of the theology of salvation', though he has reservations about Allison's use of the term 'moralism' to describe the Caroline Anglicans.³²³ He identifies not so much a change of doctrine as a new understanding of what it means to be religious, a notion of piety in which the emphasis is increasingly upon the good, the holy life. The driving incentive, in Spurr's analysis, arose from the widespread circulation of an anonymous devotional pamphlet, *The Whole Duty of Man* (1659),³²⁴ a title taken from Ecclesiastes 12: 13, 'fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man'. With a preface contributed by Hammond, it had widespread acceptance, was 'distributed by the basketful to Restoration parishioners',³²⁵ and was to be found in about one in ten homes, a book 'which achieved a saturation of the market equal to that of modern best sellers'.³²⁶ This book joined Taylor's *Holy Living* in arguing that faith was not enough. Until belief stirs up an obedient response to the related conditions, we have no reason to expect any benefit from faith.³²⁷ Indeed, Hammond went so far as to maintain that the first part of our sanctification, the beginning of a new life, must precede God's forgiveness and justification, although he acknowledged that in respect of timing there is no specific priority.³²⁸

Neil Lettinga, who has an interest in the development of seventeenth-century Anglican theological language, also notes this 'dramatic sea-change in English religion' taking place in

³²⁰ *Ibid.*

³²¹ Socinianism: See, Select Glossary.

³²² Allison, *Moralism*, pp.192-194

³²³ Spurr, *Restoration Church*, pp.297-298

³²⁴ The book is widely attributed to Richard Allestree ([Allestree], *Whole Duty*).

³²⁵ Duffy, *Long Reformation*, p.55

³²⁶ Spurr, *Restoration Church*, pp.230 and 282

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.281-282

³²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.299

the middle and latter years of the seventeenth century. Earnest English Christians, he maintains, turned from reading the Puritan divines in favour of *The Whole Duty* and Taylor's *Holy Living*, both works perceived as examples of Caroline Anglican moralism 'which taught them to attend to their Christian duties for the salvation of their souls'.³²⁹ It was a moralism which 'developed among the uncompromising Anglicans during the 1640s and 1650s'.³³⁰ Among them Lettinga identifies Hammond, maintaining that he was an Anglican who turned on its head the theology of the Westminster Confession when he argued that the Covenant of Grace was not for the elect alone, it was 'offered to all who were baptised, but required "renewed, sincere, honest, faithful obedience to the whole Gospel" as "consideration" to validate the contract. ... Anglican religion after Hammond was a religion of moral duty'.³³¹ We shall be taking a further opportunity to explore Hammond's theological stance in a chapter on Anglican Conformity.³³²

A more evident development in the theological thinking and deliberation materialising in the seventeenth century is the increasing prominence of the Calvinist/Arminian dispute which, as the century progressed, had become an issue not just between Conformists and Puritans. This is a debate that has not gone away, and has been a divisive problem, particularly among Evangelicals, ever since; it is a dispute which seems as far from resolution as ever. Both sides, reliant as they were — and are — on the Protestant principle of *sola Scriptura*, insist that theirs represents the accurate biblical reading and, in varying degrees, pronounce their opponents to be in error, unorthodox, even heretical.

The doctrinal consensus at the beginning of the seventeenth century had come under pressure, as we have seen, from the Laudian reaction to the strictures of exclusive double predestinarianism, a response manifesting itself as an English version of Arminianism which questioned the strict dogmas of Bezan Calvinism. Fuelled by the emergence of a radical Antinomian underground in mid-century, not only Conformists such as Taylor and Hammond but also conforming and nonconforming Puritans entertained misgivings about the tenets of orthodox high Calvinism, doubts which Como suggests were present even in pre-Civil-War England.³³³

That such developments were taking place amongst those claiming to hold to a Reformed position, Peter Toon maintains, is evidenced even in the *Westminster Confession* of 1647, which demonstrates a departure from the doctrinal emphasis of Calvin in three

³²⁹ Lettinga, 'Covenant Theology', p.653

³³⁰ *Ibid.*, p.654

³³¹ *Ibid.*, pp.658-659, citing Hammond, *Practical Catechism*, pp.12-13

³³² Below, pp.132-142

³³³ Como, *Antinomian Underground*, especially pp.73-103

respects. Firstly, federal or covenant theology ‘developed in the 16th century and came to maturity in the early 17th century and is to be found in the Confession’.³³⁴ Toon considers this approach to be a rigid and systematic interpretation of the biblical data, a system that took decades to formulate, losing in the process the dynamism of the biblical portrayal of redemption. This is a view endorsed by Clifford who maintains that even Calvin would have rejected the *Westminster Confession* for the very reason that it failed to endorse the universal sufficiency of the atonement. Clifford’s contribution we shall be exploring,³³⁵ but he takes the view that ‘the Westminster divines were the victims of an anti-Arminian over-reaction’. Secondly, Toon agrees with the view that ‘predestination’ had become too dominant a dogma by the mid-seventeenth century, elevating it to a position and function that Calvin would not have accepted. Finally, by the seventeenth century, Reformed theology had come to accept ‘limited atonement’ as an essential element of the Reformed stance, whereas for Calvin the ‘question as to the extent of the atonement does not seem to have bothered him’.³³⁶ Kendall goes further, asserting that Calvin rejected the belief that Christ died only for the elect; of this Kendall is certain.³³⁷ Baxter certainly endorsed that view citing Calvin’s interpretation of biblical texts, such as 1 John 2: 2, to affirm that Christ’s death was sufficient, a ‘propitiation’ for the sins of ‘the whole world’, but only effective for the elect. He maintained that Scripture demonstrates that not even those who denied the sovereign Lord were excluded from the ransom purchased by Christ’s death (2 Peter 2: 1).³³⁸ Baxter’s and Kendall’s assertions are far from universally accepted as Robert A. Peterson has demonstrated. Evidence from the *Institutes*, Peterson notes, is limited, but Calvin’s commentaries could be said to favour limited atonement, though the evidence is ‘insubstantial’. Against that, it can be argued that in his sermons he taught unlimited atonement. ‘There is evidence in Calvin that both sides can claim as their own’. Peterson concludes that the issue was not a matter of contention until the next generation after Calvin and that it is not possible to be certain what position he would have taken had he been alive at the time of the debates. Peterson does take the view, nonetheless, that limited atonement does fit better with Calvin’s overall system of thought.³³⁹

Kendall agrees with Toon in the claim that the divines of the Westminster Assembly had departed from classic Calvinist dogma. He maintains that whilst ‘the Westminster

³³⁴ Toon, *Puritans*, p.60. See, Select Glossary

³³⁵ Below, pp.174-175

³³⁶ Toon, *Puritans*, p.61

³³⁷ Kendall, *Calvin*, p.13, and above, p.52

³³⁸ Baxter, *Catholic Theologie*, II, p.51

³³⁹ Peterson, *Calvin*, pp.115-120

divines never intended to make works the ground of salvation, they could hardly have come closer'.³⁴⁰ For them, saving faith is defined as 'yeelding obedience' to the commands of God, the 'principall Acts' of our faith are of the will. All this, Kendall argues, 'seems to make the claims of "free grace" suspect'.³⁴¹ These developments in seventeenth-century soteriology we shall be exploring in greater depth in the sections on Baxter and Owen.³⁴²

Returning to Placher, he agrees with Como and Kendall in their suggestion that seventeenth-century moralising trends are not limited to Conformist thought, but are also to be found among Puritans. Whilst they emphasized election and irresistible grace, rejecting any proposition that human effort contributed to salvation, at the same time they 'worried intensely about people's moral and spiritual lives ... warning that one's eternal salvation might well be at stake ... This second concern tended to undercut the first',³⁴³ in that the Puritan preaches justification by grace without any regard to merit, yet evidence for that election is required in personal holiness which is to be seen in the Puritan's insistence on the 'reformation of manners' and the godly life. For the Puritan our sanctification is as significant as our justification. If the essential evidence of justifying faith is to be found in 'good works' how can it be argued that salvation has not become conditional? There is logic in Placher's unease, for if our works of holiness are acts of obedience emanating from an independent decision of the will, a matter of choice and effort on our part, then our 'good works', our obedience, become an essential elements in the process of salvation.

Baxter is acknowledged by Placher to be an example of the increased emphasis amongst Puritans upon good works. Baxter's assurance of pardon from sins confessed was coupled with an assertion that 'till Men have new and holy Hearts, they can neither see God, nor love him, nor delight in him, nor take him for their chief Content'.³⁴⁴ 'Our Evangelicall Righteousness ... consisteth in our own actions of Faith and Gospel Obedience' he insisted. 'Though Christ performed the conditions of the Law, and satisfied for our non-performance; yet it is our selves that must perform the conditions of the Gospel'.³⁴⁵ In the very title of a posthumous publication he undertook to tell us what is required. *The Grand Question Resolved* (1692) sought to answer this crucial question: here he inculcated into his readers the 'necessity, reason and means of holiness'.³⁴⁶ For unless in a man the 'Carnal be made Spiritual, [the] Earthly be made Heavenly, [the] Selfish and Sinful be made Holy and

³⁴⁰ Kendall, *Calvin*, p.205

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*

³⁴² Below, Chapter 5

³⁴³ Placher, *Domestication*, pp.99-100

³⁴⁴ Baxter, *Question Resolved*, pp.5-6

³⁴⁵ Baxter, *Aphorisms*, p.70

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.1-2

Obedient to God, he can never be saved, no more than the Devil himself can be saved'.³⁴⁷ In the Edmund Calamy (1600-1666) edition of his farewell sermon he is said to have instructed his congregation, 'Your eternal happiness will partly consist in your personal perfection'.³⁴⁸ We shall be examining Baxter's stance further on these issues in the section devoted to him.³⁴⁹

Given the exacting demands of this moralising stance where is now the gracious offer of unconditional salvation? The Reformers declared that Salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone: *sola gratia* and *sola fide*. But, as Stephen Lewis observes, as early as Calvin's successor at Geneva, Beza, it is no longer 'faith alone saves' because 'faith that saves is never alone'.³⁵⁰ Holiness before God is essential and any failure to be holy by the rigorous standards set by both Baxter and Taylor brings into question our very status before God. We are back where we started, under a 'law'; God is once more our taskmaster, not only our Saviour. Free grace is not free after all and, for the seeking sinner sitting in the Sunday pew, the longed for joy of sins forgiven and peace with God is crushed beneath the weight of a requirement to adhere to a standard more rigorous than the original. How many can even begin to claim that they have achieved the apparently indispensable holiness advocated by Puritan and Conformist alike? The issues raised by this question are important and we shall explore more of this when we come to deal in greater detail with both Taylor and Baxter — in Chapters 4 and 5 — and their stance on morality: to what extent does ethical behaviour constitute a ground of acceptance in the divine plan?

Thus, within the Church in England it is claimed, theologians were moving away from standard Protestant insistence on *sola fide* as the only grounds for salvation, clouding the issue by stressing that faith must include works of Christian piety. Spurr also maintains that this approach is to be found among the Puritans,³⁵¹ reminding us that 'the puritan impulse' can be seen as 'a drive to show in their lives their strong sense of their own personal salvation', and that it was this quality that 'made it possible to recognise others who were also visibly worthy of election to salvation'. Yet it is a basic tenet of Reformed theology that there is no quality that can ever make humanity 'worthy' of election to salvation. Salvation rests solely in the sovereign will of God, entirely unrelated to the good standing of the recipient.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p.9

³⁴⁸ Baxter, 'Farewell Sermon', Calamy version, Calamy *Exact Collection*, p.143. Baxter disowned this version of his St. Anne's, Blackfriars, farewell sermon. See below, pp.182-183

³⁴⁹ Below, p.150ff

³⁵⁰ Lewis, 'Review of Kendall', p.65

³⁵¹ Spurr, 'Religion', p.425

In contrast to these analyses it is the view of the Anglican theologian J.I. Packer that it was not the Puritan intention to introduce legalism into their ethical teaching:

The supreme ethical motives in Puritanism were gratitude for grace received, and a sense of responsibility to walk worthy of one's calling ... the Christian works *from* life, rather than *for* life ... our best works are shot through with sin, and contain something that needs to be forgiven.³⁵²

Packer has made an important assessment of the Puritans and we shall be examining his analysis — to be found in his book *A Quest for Godliness* — in the chapter on seventeenth-century Puritanism.³⁵³ His high regard for the Puritans is without question, particularly the strength of their biblical doctrinal stance, but there is an exception and it involves one of the major Puritans of the seventeenth century. He is not wholly in favour of Baxter. Packer has serious reservations about some of Baxter's theology, concerns that spring from his own Calvinist position. Packer has little sympathy with Arminianism, and Baxter, though acknowledged to have been a great and saintly man, was half way to being Arminian.³⁵⁴ Packer is giving support to Placher's arguments when he asserts that this great Puritan thinker and pastor was sowing the seeds 'of moralism with regard to sin, Arianism with regard to Christ, legalism with regard to faith and salvation, and liberalism with regard to God'. In Packer's opinion Baxter as a theologian, whilst 'brilliant, [was] something of a disaster'.³⁵⁵ The result was that 'after more than a century of clear gospel light',³⁵⁶ 'Anglican' Arminianism brought 'darkness back to the minds of conformists', whilst 'Baxterianism' did the same for the Nonconformists. So would start the decline, the bitter pill suffered by Presbyterianism until the opening of a new era in the eighteenth century in the person of George Whitefield (1714-1770). Packer is evidently not looking for deliverance in the direction of John Wesley (1703-1791), who remains an enduring thorn in the flesh for every present day Calvinist.³⁵⁷ Packer's assessment — and similar verdicts on Baxter's theological stance — have come under recent scrutiny by Clifford who arrives at the conclusion that they 'clearly reflect the current revival of interest in the type of theology espoused by John Owen'.³⁵⁸ In a detailed study in which he seeks to examine Baxter's stance relative to the opinions of Owen and John Wesley *vis-à-vis* the doctrine of

³⁵² Packer, *Quest*, pp.118-119

³⁵³ See below, pp.146-150

³⁵⁴ Packer, *Quest*, pp.157-160

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.158-160

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p.160. A questionable assessment, given the inability of Puritans, as we shall see, to agree among themselves.

³⁵⁷ Packer considers Wesley's theology to be a 'private oddity'; Packer, *Quest*, p.46. Wesley evidently failed to retain his confidentiality!

³⁵⁸ Clifford, *Atonement*, p.17

justification, Clifford maintains that Baxter's critics have 'tended to minimize the exegetical foundations of his theological case, relying on assumptions that are themselves questionable'.³⁵⁹

As a comparison, a favourite with Packer is Perkins. 'No Puritan thinker ever did more to shape and solidify historic Puritanism itself', he claims. Perkins is considered the prime example of 'real Puritanism'. In spite of differences of polity and politics, Puritans were held together, Packer maintains, for over a century by their shared biblical and Calvinist convictions about Christian faith and practice, and their views on the nature of congregational life and the pastoral office. Having defined Puritanism, in 1990, as a 'movement ... which sought further reformation and renewal in the Church of England than the Elizabethan settlement allowed',³⁶⁰ he expands on this classification in the published version of a 1996 lecture, given on Perkins, by arguing that Puritanism is

an evangelical holiness movement seeking to implement its vision of spiritual renewal, national and personal, in the church, the state, and the home; in education, evangelism, and economics; in individual discipleship and devotion, and in pastoral care and competence. Many know that real Puritan piety centred upon regeneration and repentance, self-suspicion and self-examination, rational biblicism and righteous behavior, discursive meditation and rhetorical prayer, faith in and love to Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, recognition of the sovereignty of God in providence, grace, and judgment, the comfort and joy of a well grounded assurance, the need to educate and cherish one's conscience, the spiritual war against the world, the flesh and the devil, the ethic of discipline and duty, and the saints' hope of glory.³⁶¹

What we find here is of importance. Packer's wider conception, as a theologian, of the criteria that define a Puritan is markedly at variance with that proposed by many of the historians we have reviewed, and it is an analysis which I find both interesting and persuasive. It expresses precisely what is to be abundantly found in Puritan texts, and it is a definition that historians could well explore with benefit.

For Packer the biblical faith of the Puritans drove them towards the goal of the godly life but in this incentive the Puritan was not unique. 'The Puritans' motivation was to be a 'man of God',³⁶² reflected in an indispensable and defining way of life, which is an assessment that can equally be granted to Baxter, in spite of Packer's allegations of moralism and legalism. Baxter was being driven by precisely the same motivation to be found in many Puritan works, a desire for holiness of life in order to please God. And it is an impetus also shared

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p.25

³⁶⁰ Packer, *Quest*, pp.35-36

³⁶¹ Packer, *Perkins*, pp.1-2

³⁶² Packer, *Quest*, p.329

by Conformists such as Taylor and Hammond who, in their striving for godliness, were second to none.

Mention should be made of another slant on Puritanism, which was highlighted by the late Canadian theologian Stanley J. Grenz, who suggested that what identifies the Puritans is not only their emphasis on Word and sacrament, but, additionally and essentially, on Church discipline, a notion which arose out of their understanding of the nature of the Church.³⁶³ The true Church is not only identified by its preaching of the gospel and its celebration of biblical truth, it is distinctively the congregation of the faithful. The Church of England failed to exercise discipline: it was a mixed Church that refused to differentiate between the regenerate and the unregenerate in its midst. Puritans, argued Grenz, pressed for a gathered Church consisting only of visible saints, those believers who gave visible evidence of their response to the gospel, thereby signifying their divine election to those predestined for salvation.

Let us endeavor to draw some conclusions. What are the distinctions to be found between the theologian's and the historian's approach to this subject? What we have here, I suggest, are contrasting — though not opposing — understandings of the criteria that specifically define Puritanism, with the theologian placing greater emphasis on Puritan spirituality and piety. Additionally, I find a difficulty emerging in scholarly attempts at analysis resulting from an apparent difference of approach by theologians and historians to their subject. For the historian, the causes and the progression of events in the early modern Church have natural explanations. They are the upshot of 'a closed chain of visible cause and effect'.³⁶⁴ The possibility that any, or all, of these developments could have resulted from divine involvement is rarely considered. Whilst the historian's concern is rationally to analyse the evidence, many theologians — though not all — will, to a lesser or greater degree depending upon his or her own religious persuasion, start with the premise that there is a divine element present in the evolving record. Those theologians are in a position to appreciate, if not always to endorse, the assertion on the part of the participants, in our case the Conformists and the Puritans, that their beliefs were well founded, and that the practice and faithful declaration of them was bound to have its effect. They were, after all, claiming to be in the business of participating in God's plan. For the Puritan, any change of heart and mind effected in an individual by the proclamation of Reformed doctrine — or as he would prefer, the 'preaching of the gospel'

³⁶³ Grenz, *Renewing*, pp.42-44

³⁶⁴ N.T. Wright in a lecture, 'Did Jesus really rise from the dead?', given at Roanoke College, Salem, Virginia, March 16, 2007

— has a straightforward explanation. It is initiated by the Holy Ghost; it is the work of God. Contributing to the debate from the positions they hold, many within theological academies, the Christian theologian — each holding to their own particular tradition — is in a position to take account of that possibility. J.I. Packer certainly does: God is sovereign, the preacher must preach, but ‘it is God’s work to convince of the truth and write it in the heart’.³⁶⁵ Cultural, circumstantial and social pressures etc. are not the only explanations, in such understandings, for what was going on. The question I would ask is whether or not it is a legitimate approach for the theologian and the historian to take account of the involvement of providence: of a divine engagement? Indeed, might it not be argued that it is God that empowers the course of events, in which case cultural and social circumstances are but his tools in the process? I find that the historian neither confirms nor denies that possibility; it appears not to be his or her concern, although there are historians who do not fall within that category. David Bebbington, as an example, argues that ‘the Christian idea of history is derived from a belief in a God who intervenes in the world’. He introduces the view that the Judeo-Christian understanding of history is moulded by a belief in a God who is sovereign, one who acts in love and in so doing ‘participates in history, guides the whole process and will bring it to a triumphal conclusion’. At the core of his thesis is the Christian doctrine of providence.³⁶⁶

Ben Quash in *Theology* also takes note of the separation apparent between the disciplines. ‘In the universities of the modern West’, he argues, ‘the analysis of historical events goes on largely in departments or faculties of history ... and lies in the hands of scholars who are not expected to have recourse to ideas about divine activity ... Such ideas might ... discredit them as professional historians altogether because they fall outside prevailing canons of what counts as respectable evidence or defensible speculation’.³⁶⁷ In an extended and persuasive discussion on this point, he argues that ‘Christian theology asserts the relationship of all historical events, processes and agents to a transcendent order and with it to an ultimate meaning’. Quash goes on to insist that Christian theology ‘is obliged to think about history’, and in so doing it can make its own ‘distinctive ... contribution to discussion with other disciplines about the subject of history: namely, that it is a discipline defined by its response to, and its thinking out of, divine self-disclosure’.³⁶⁸ Given the strength of this argument, it is surprising therefore to discover that, whereas Quash

³⁶⁵ Packer, *Quest*, p.283

³⁶⁶ Bebbington, *Patterns in History*, p.43

³⁶⁷ Quash, *Theology*, p.2

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.2-3

acknowledges an engagement in his work with philosophers, poets and dramatists, it is difficult to find any like engagement with historians, this in a book ‘that is concerned to identify resources to help theology think and talk about history’.³⁶⁹

Quash is far from being alone in an apparent lack of inter-disciplinary engagement with historians. J.I.Packer, as we shall find in Chapter 5,³⁷⁰ and other contributors to our subject whose interests lie in the history of theology, demonstrate this same deficiency. Alistair McGrath in his *Historical Theology*, when recommending further reading on the Reformation and post-Reformation periods, makes no mention of the standard historians that we have identified in this thesis, and Roger E. Olson’s *Christian Theology*, an extensive work on the history of Christian theology — and a book which sadly lacks a bibliography — also fails to take account of the work of major Church historians for our period.

Historians, it has to be acknowledged, fare little or no better. Many will venture into the theological arena, analysing the doctrinal stance of their subjects, but it is not always possible to find evidence that, in their attempts to draw theological conclusions, they have drawn upon the insight of academic theologians to their topic. As a result the impression is being given that there is little by way of inter-disciplinary debate, let alone co-operation, between historians and theologians. It is even possible to conclude that, for the most part, they ignore each other and consequently they are arriving at differing conclusions, this to the apparent weakness of both their cases. How can we as historians adequately discuss the impact of doctrines such as Calvinism and Arminianism on Church and society without reference to the contribution of theologians? I would argue that if as historians we fail to engage seriously with academic theologians, then we render ourselves less than adequately qualified to draw meaningful conclusions with regard to the implications of the theological aspects of our subject. Williams has a persuasive comment when he maintains that we should be

looking for a way of reading Church history that is theologically sensitive. This does not mean allowing theological interests to settle historical questions or pretending that you should not pay attention to human motives and social and political conditioning when you look at the Christian past: good theology does not come from bad history.³⁷¹

It is almost time now to move on to our analysis of the primary evidence but, before we begin, a word about my choice of sources. The procedure that has been followed is to explore the divergent work of representative theologians that give evidence of making a significant contribution to the issues that are raised by this thesis, which can be briefly

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, inside cover review, and Introduction

³⁷⁰ See below, pp.146-147

³⁷¹ Williams, *Why Study the Past*, p.2

stated thus: what does the evidence to be found in four categories — that is in the writings, pronouncements, and activities of Conformist and Nonconformist theologians in the late sixteenth and mid-seventeenth centuries — tell us about the nature and causes of religious diversity in English Christendom in those periods? By identifying their respective theological standing, their willingness to engage in polemical controversy on religious topics, their attitude towards the toleration of contrary religious beliefs, and the content of their individual spirituality, we shall be in a position to identify the essential causes of division in the early modern English Church, and thereby arrive at meaningful conclusions.

When making choices primary evidence is abundant, requiring a clear selection process. Since no case can be proven built upon one or two examples, the sources on which I have relied have had to be characteristic and balanced, providing an adequate sample without being overwhelming. The decision was made, in both centuries, to take evidence, within each primary category (i.e. Conformist and Nonconformist) from three religious thinkers, key figures who made significant contributions to religious debates in early modern England. But how was the selection to be made; on what criteria? There is always the danger of our choices being subjective, but, given the characteristics that are to be found in the generation of religious thinkers of the time, it has been possible to make choices based upon criteria that fairly represent the spectrum of worldviews.

The features that are to be seen making their impact upon the subject of our focus revolve around the candidates' standing and influence in both the religious and secular culture in which they lived. In early modern England religion was at the heart of the nation's life; the Church was the very bulwark of security within the affairs of a nation thought to be under threat from a Catholic resurgence in the sixteenth century, whilst in the seventeenth it was the consequences of violent civil unrest which provided the motivation for thought and action. Religion was a major influential catalyst fermenting the unrest experienced in both centuries, and theologians and religious leaders were judged to have been either a threat to, or supporters of, both the nation's and the national Church's best interests. Unity in the Church was considered an imperative constituent of national strength, whilst all sides considered religious plurality unacceptable.

Within that context, the criteria which I have considered of importance are these: to what extent was there an involvement in the governance of the Church and secular rule? Was there an insistence on a particular form of ecclesiology — the nature of the Church, its structure as an institution, and the forms of its worship? In the theological sphere, what was the contender's standing on those theological issues manifest at a time when doctrine

was proving to be increasingly divisive? Did the participants engage in religious debate either directly or indirectly; did their actions and/or declarations result in division, and to what extent did the maintenance and insistence upon these varied criteria by the participants affect their pastoral concerns and responsibilities, and their desire for, or rejection of, unity and peace in the Church? A further consideration was the need to establish to what extent the contributors fairly represent the category with which they are associated, and the choices made are considered to fall within that mandate.

The twelve choices made are listed in the Table of Contents and are first introduced, from the sixteenth century, at the end of chapter 1,³⁷² and from the seventeenth century, at the commencement of the next chapter.³⁷³ Thereafter the extent to which they can be justifiably identified with my criteria can be seen in the sections which are devoted to them. We commence with an examination of Conformist polemic in the seventeenth century.

³⁷² Above, p.68

³⁷³ Below, p.106

Chapter 4

Seventeenth-Century Conformity

By the name of the Church of England ... we plainly and charitably mean that part of mankind in this polity and nation, which having been called, baptised, and instructed by lawful ministers in the mysteries and duties of the Gospel maketh a joint and public profession of the Christian Faith and reformed religion ... as it is grounded upon the Holy Scriptures.

John Gauden (1605-1662)³⁷⁴

In our exploration of the religious controversies that led up to the great divide in the English Church during the 1660s, it is intended now to scrutinise the life and works of a number of the principal participants in seventeenth-century religious debates. On the Puritan side, we shall explore the stance taken by the hugely iconic Richard Baxter of Kidderminster, and John Owen, the Independent divine. Additionally we shall examine the stand taken by some of the ejected Nonconformists of 1662, as demonstrated by their related sermons and books, preached and published at the time of their expulsion. Of the Conformists in the seventeenth century, this study centres on William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury from 1633 until his execution in 1645, Jeremy Taylor, staunch defender of the ‘Anglican’ Church throughout the 1640s and 1650s and beyond, and Henry Hammond, the uncompromising Conformist apologist, so effective in rallying conservative ‘Anglican’ forces during the years that their beloved episcopal national Church endured banishment.

Conformity in the last decades of Elizabeth’s reign had meant an acceptance of, and commitment to, the Elizabethan Church settlement expressed in a Church structure and practice as advocated by Whitgift and Hooker, upholding the twin pillars of royal supremacy and the authority of the episcopate: the two were inter-dependent, all else in the Church was in submission to both. This was a concept with which, they argued, Presbyterianism was incompatible. As we move towards and into the seventeenth century Jacobean era the episcopate began to be seen as an office holding divine authority with an apostolic foundation: bishops stood in direct succession to St. Peter, and the apostles.³⁷⁵ The Conformist stance on episcopacy, as Lake has demonstrated, was moving in the latter years of Elizabeth’s reign from Whitgift’s acceptance that there was no prescribed or forbidden form of Church government in Scripture — that the then present settlement in the Church was the most convenient for the times — towards an insistence on the *jure*

³⁷⁴ Gauden, *Ecclesiae Anglicanae*, p.24

³⁷⁵ For an expansion of this theme, see Lake, *Anglicans and Puritans?*, pp.88-144

divino status for bishops, endorsed by ‘scriptural exegesis, patristical authority, church history, and abstract reasoning’.³⁷⁶

The effective Jacobean ecclesiastical practice was to require subscription but without rigid conformity in liturgy and ceremony, this in accordance with the royal intention to contain within the Church loyal Nonconformists whilst excluding radicals.³⁷⁷ But, as Bishop Thomas Morton (*bap.* 1564–1659) — successively Bishop of Chester, Coventry and Lichfield, and Durham — argued, if Puritans were to insist on freedom of conscience in liturgy and ceremonies for themselves, they must allow the same to their opponents. Morton pursued the argument that there are no grounds for deeming indifferent ceremonies unlawful, for where Scripture has no reference to them, they have been rendered lawful on the Church’s own authority:

Nothing that is [Adiaphoron] and indifferent, can be pronounced simply unlawfull: But some Ceremonies of mans invention, without speciall warrant from the Scriptures, are indifferent, by the judgement of Divines, of whatsoever sort, or faction: *Ergo*, some such Ceremonies may be held lawfull.³⁷⁸

Wasn’t it Calvin himself, Morton argued, who insisted that ‘Christ would not prescribe particular Ceremonies to his Church, because it is impossible, that the same Ceremonies should be convenient and agreeable to all so different Nations, as are in the world?’³⁷⁹

The intense debate amongst historians regarding the rise of Arminianism in the Jacobean and Caroline Church we have covered previously,³⁸⁰ and its effects will be considered when we explore Laud’s involvement, but Morton’s participation reminds us that by no means all Conformists were to be found in the anti-Calvinist camp. He was a moderate Calvinist, and another typical Conformist was Robert Sanderson (1587-1663), Bishop of Lincoln from 1660, who retained his doctrinal Calvinism well into the seventeenth century, yet he fervently denounced Puritan arguments against ceremonies. He is, in Lake’s view, an excellent example of the way ‘that even men who shared great tracts of ideological terrain with the Puritans could end up hating them with a passion’.³⁸¹ In 1655 and 1657 Sanderson wrote strongly worded prefaces to collections of his sermons that accused Presbyterians and Independents of having opened the door to sectarianism and thereby to popery or even atheism.³⁸² As to the ecclesiastical policies of King James, Tyacke

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.88-96

³⁷⁷ Fincham, ‘Clerical Conformity’, pp.141-142

³⁷⁸ Morton, *Ceremonies*, p.23

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁰ Above, from p.74

³⁸¹ Lake, ‘Sanderson’, p.115

³⁸² McGee, ‘Sanderson’

highlights the views of Fincham and Lake, who argue that the king sought to drive a wedge between moderate and radical Puritans, and that there was an emphatic shift of sympathy in favour of the anti-Calvinists. Yet given the retained strength of Jacobean Calvinism, whilst private divergence was acceptable, ‘the demands of political and ecclesiastical order would not allow open dispute, so the king suppressed public expression of anti-Calvinistic theology’.³⁸³

The tenor of prescribed Conformity made a significant move with the accession of Charles I and, with the focus of power shifting from a disempowered Abbot to a group of *avant-garde* sacerdotalists, episcopal doctrinal orthodoxy moved away from consensual Calvinism and limited silent nonconformity towards ‘Laudianism’, an expression which Webster prefers to ‘Anti-Calvinist’ or ‘Arminian’ given the need for a term to cover changes to liturgy, furniture and discipline.³⁸⁴ Under the influence of these ‘conservative’ clerics, including Andrewes, Richard Neile (1562-1640), Richard Montague (1574-1641), Laud, Wren, and Cosin, there was a move to add to this Arminian, or Anti-Calvinist theology, their own theological and liturgical convictions not found in Continental Arminianism. Their policy involved the strict observance of the Elizabethan prayer book liturgy and rubrics, the gradual yet positively imposed requirement to move the communion table to the east of the chancel³⁸⁵ with the Eucharist to be seen as the climax of the liturgy: a sacramental means of grace. The whole was to be supported by the upkeep and decoration of churches in the provision of ‘beauty of holiness’ to enhance reverent church worship, an increased use of Laudian ritualism, and greater use of music in church services, with both choirs and musical instruments. These, together with the prohibition of controversial doctrinal debate, were all seen by the Conformist as a return to traditional values of decency and order. Conformist suspicions regarding the value of preaching and personal interpretation of Scripture by the laity led to a greater emphasis on the sacraments as a means of grace. They denied that the Pope was Antichrist and accepted that Catholics could attain salvation.³⁸⁶ Sundays were less austere observed which resulted in the encouragement of Sunday sporting activities.

In short, as McGee argues, for ‘Anglicans’ — in our terminology, for Conformists — the central issue was that they were devoted to the house of the Lord and the place where God’s honour dwells. They abhorred sacrilege of the place of worship. A clash was

³⁸³ Tyacke, *Aspects*, pp.12-13, citing Fincham and Lake, ‘Ecclesiastical policies’, pp.23-24, and 32

³⁸⁴ Webster, ‘Puritanism’, pp.55-56

³⁸⁵ Fincham argues that this change was imposed in the absence of any canonical requirement before 1640. Fincham, ‘Clerical Conformity’, p.148

³⁸⁶ Doran and Durston, *Princes*, p.25

inevitable because ‘the ceremonialism which profaned the worship of God by its presence for the Puritans profaned that service by its absence for the Anglicans’.³⁸⁷ Maltby maintains that by the eve of the Civil Wars, based on the evidence of the many petitions made to Parliament at the time, whilst not all Conformists were supportive of Laud they did maintain their allegiance to the *Book of Common Prayer* and to episcopacy in defence of a Christian tradition they feared they were about to lose. Both the office of bishop, as being an apostolic office, and the service book, essentially in agreement with ancient liturgies, were supported by antiquity.³⁸⁸ But when it came to a declaration of doctrine, as Allinson observes, there was not one systematic theologian among the ‘Carolines’.³⁸⁹ Since controversy on substantive theological issues was generally avoided, confusion resulted on soteriology, on the grounds of justification, and the nature of sanctification. The not insubstantial writings of the Carolines majored on practical and devotional issues, denunciations of Roman Catholic doctrine, and catechistical writings on the creed.

Let us then examine the involvement of our three selected conformist divines, taking us, as they do, up to and through the eventful middle decades of the seventeenth century with their commitment to retain the integrity of the Church of England, a period which includes an imposed exclusion that drove two of them to express their opinions in extensive printed publications.

a. William Laud and counter reformation

I have done. I forgive all the world, all and every one of those bitter enemies, ... which have ... persecuted me ... and humbly desire to be forgiven first of God, and then of every man, ... and so I heartily desire you to joyne with me in prayer.

From Laud’s speech and prayer on the scaffold³⁹⁰

In any exploration of religious contention in the seventeenth century it is not possible to ignore Archbishop William Laud, a primate who has proved to be an enigmatic figure, the more so as historians have attempted to grapple with his theological stance within seventeenth-century doctrinal debates. In Collinson’s view, ‘the greatest calamity ever visited upon’ the Church of England was Archbishop Laud,³⁹¹ but as Margot Todd makes clear, not all historians or theologians concur with that assessment:

³⁸⁷ McGee, *Godly Man*, pp.95-96

³⁸⁸ Maltby, ‘Petitions’, pp.105-110

³⁸⁹ Allinson, *Moralism*, p.201

³⁹⁰ Laud, *Funerall Sermon*, pp.14-15

³⁹¹ Collinson, *Religion of Protestants*, p.80

This view of Laud has provoked a sharp reaction from those historians who take the archbishop at his own word and portray him as the defender of a traditional order of worship, interested NOT in theological dispute at all, but in uniformity and peace.³⁹²

Tyacke maintains that 'Laud deserves to rank among the greatest archbishops of Canterbury since the Reformation. ... But to say this does not necessarily imply approval ... rather ... that he made a major contribution to the future of the English Church'.³⁹³

Interpretations of Laud have rarely been given to consistency. Andrew Foster notes that:

it was once safe to assume that Archbishop William Laud was one of the 'twin pillars of Stuart despotism'; now we are asked to think of him as a kindly old man whom we have all misunderstood, a man who pursued his goals with more moderation than despotism.³⁹⁴

Laud is unfortunate in that his character has been assessed largely from the writings of friends and enemies rather than from his own works. Davies, in his review of historiographical developments, identifies analyses varying from Macaulay's 'ridiculous old bigot' to William Gladstone's view that he was the most tolerant Archbishop of Canterbury for many generations.³⁹⁵ Whig historians accused Laud of 'turning religion into a systematic attack on English liberty',³⁹⁶ whilst others, such as R. Ashton, place the major responsibility for the fall of the Stuart monarchy on the Archbishop.³⁹⁷ Citing from a contemporary perspective Ashton draws our attention to the view of Sir Harbottle Grimston (1603/4-1685/6), variously both a parliamentary and royalist sympathiser, Speaker of the House of Commons at the Restoration and Master of the Rolls from 1660 to 1685. His verdict on Laud in a speech delivered to Parliament on December 18, 1640 was that he was 'the sty of all the pestilential filth that hath infected the State and the government of this church and commonwealth', one who, along with many others that he 'raised and advanced ... have bin the Authors and Causers of all the Ruines Miseries, and Calamities, we now groane under'.³⁹⁸ This contemporary judgment is an extreme view. Let us examine the considered analyses of more recent opinions.

First penned in 1940, Hugh Trevor-Roper's monumental work on the life and standing of Laud in the history of English society takes issue with those biographers and commentators he regarded as either high Anglican clergymen who approach their subject

³⁹² Todd, *Reformation to Revolution*, p.71

³⁹³ Tyacke, *Aspects*, p.203

³⁹⁴ Foster, 'Church Policies', p.193, citing Sharpe, 'Laud', p.29

³⁹⁵ Davies, *Caroline Captivity*, p.47, citing Collins, *Lectures on Laud*, pp.158 and 119

³⁹⁶ Green, *Short History*, III, pp.1040-1041

³⁹⁷ Ashton, *English Civil War*, p.110

³⁹⁸ Grimston, *Speech*, p.2

‘on their knees’, or their opponents, the ‘doughty dissenters’, prone to launch their ‘furious broadside[s] in order to counter high Anglican propaganda’.³⁹⁹ Trevor-Roper protests that Laud, having been

extracted from the social conditions in which he lived and with which his policy was identified, ... has been regarded as a theologian whose views, independent of his age, may be judged by the eternal standard of Divine Truth.

Trevor-Roper is not prepared to regard Laud as a theologian, nor does he engage with the accuracy or otherwise of his theological opinions. His concern is with Laud’s stance as a politician and his engagement with seventeenth-century English society, which is considered to have been ‘more important than the intricacies of the Will of God’.⁴⁰⁰ As such his work has a different approach to the enquiries that motivate this thesis.

Lake offers us a more pertinent opinion, suggesting that Laud was attempting to redraw, or redefine, the line between the sacred and the profane, and Lake refuses to be drawn into debates that either reduce Laudianism to ‘a series of numbered points about predestination [or] an assemblage of conventional conformist commonplaces about the need for order, obedience and conformity’.⁴⁰¹ In this he differs from Tyacke who takes a more singular approach. Tyacke’s argument is that regardless of Laud’s insistence that he was not an Arminian, a denial which he maintained at his trial, Laud was foremost among the ‘Arminians’ or, as is sometimes preferred, the ‘anti-Calvinists’ in the 1620s and 1630s. Tyacke takes a broad definition of the term ‘Arminian’, but insists that

without doubt Laud was a passionate anti-Calvinist, who denounced the Lambeth Articles as containing “fatal opinions”. He also condemned Calvinist teaching on reprobation and perseverance. Calvinism, claimed Laud, makes God “to be the most unreasonable tyrant in the world” and “teareth up the very foundations of religion”.⁴⁰²

Tyacke here is citing Laud’s ten objections to the doctrines of the Brownists⁴⁰³ which he lists in his *Answer*, a response to a speech by Lord Say and Sele on the subject of the liturgy. His eighth objection is that they

say that God from all eternity reprobates by far the greater part of mankind to eternal fire, without any eye at all to their sin. With which opinion my very soul abominates. ... it makes the God of all mercies, to be the most fierce and unreasonable tyrant in the world.⁴⁰⁴

³⁹⁹ Trevor-Roper, *Laud*, p.6

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.6-7

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p.164

⁴⁰² Tyacke, ‘Rise of Arminianism’, p.215, citing Laud, *Works*, VI, pp.132-133

⁴⁰³ Brownists: an early Independent Separatist group, followers of Robert Browne (1550-1633)

⁴⁰⁴ Laud, ‘Answer’ p.503

Such sentiments are certainly anti-Calvinist, although they can scarcely be described as an accurate account of the Calvinist doctrine of election in whatever form.

Tyacke's view of Laud's doctrinal stance is the subject of debate and is disputed by revisionist interpreters such as Davies, who argues that 'the Laudian emphasis on the sacraments and the institutional Church stemmed not from the rise of Arminianism but from the patristic reorientation and historical reinvestment of Anglicans'.⁴⁰⁵ This is a view supported by Sharpe who maintains that charges of innovation, Arminianism, and popery, brought by contemporaries and endorsed by recent historians, 'would have puzzled Laud himself. For where he met controversy, he eschewed it; [and] in contrast to the charge of innovation he asserted his conservatism'.⁴⁰⁶ Sharpe claims that Laud's intent was the maintenance of order and discipline. The Church has to acknowledge tradition as well as the authority of Scripture: it was a Church of the sacraments, and his concern was for the condition of the churches, the churchyard and the church furniture, and all this necessitated effective authority.⁴⁰⁷ Whilst noting that Laud argued that the truth regarding predestination and reprobation was 'not determinable by any human reason in this life', Sharpe, in *Personal Rule*, maintains that 'the case that Laud was a doctrinal Arminian has yet to be made'.⁴⁰⁸

Alan Cromartie offers a unique attempt to 'escape from the two-party model' of the prelate in which he takes 'a fresh look at Laud' with a focus 'not on his actions but his [own] writings'.⁴⁰⁹ In an article written within a book (2011) in which scholars review analyses of the causes of the Civil Wars, he maintains that pre-war contentions 'weren't defined ... by attitudes to Laud ... but [by] the threat or promise of godly reformation'.⁴¹⁰ His 'rather surprising conclusion' was that 'Laud's views were in no way exceptional'. Cromartie, relying on Laud's notes on his personal copy of Bellarmine's *Disputationes*,⁴¹¹ argues that Laud 'presuppose[s] that Calvin is the Church of England's spokesman and even Beza ought to be defended'.⁴¹² At the same time Laud was tolerant of Arminianism and he made efforts to avoid disputes and pronouncements on the topic.⁴¹³ All in all, Cromartie argues, what was striking about Laud's ideas 'was their essential loyalty to an established framework'.

⁴⁰⁵ Davies, *Caroline Captivity*, pp.52-53

⁴⁰⁶ Sharpe, 'Laud', p.26

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p.28

⁴⁰⁸ Sharpe, *Personal Rule*, pp.285-286, citing Laud, *Works*, VI, p.292, and VII, p.275

⁴⁰⁹ Cromartie, 'Mind', p.76

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.75

⁴¹¹ Robert Bellarmine, *Disputationes de controversiis christianae fidei* (1581-1593)

⁴¹² Cromartie, 'Mind', p.88

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*, pp.92 and 99

Bernard disputes the suggestion that there was any Arminian plot at all. Laud's purpose was to prevent discussion on thorny matters, including extreme Arminianism. He framed no new doctrinal articles, wrote no new catechism, and published little. He never wrote theologically against predestination or Puritans and he never tried to create an overtly Arminian clergy. The evidence that he was an Arminian is considered by Bernard to be 'at best technical [which is scarcely a criticism] and rests on inference', whilst such corroboration as is advanced for an 'Arminian' conspiracy to capture the Church is judged to be 'slight'.⁴¹⁴ At the local parish level there is little evidence, he claims, of theological and doctrinal dispute.⁴¹⁵

Tyacke responds by asking that, if Laud was no innovator but rather a highly efficient administrator, then what is the explanation for his archiepiscopate proving so controversial?⁴¹⁶ Nevertheless, in conjunction with Fincham, he acknowledges that whilst Laud might be considered contentious, historians have tended to exaggerate the unpopularity of Laudianism: the positive strength of its influence was maintained right through the period 1640-60, and 'as a result [Laudian sympathisers] returned to the top table of the restored Church of England'.⁴¹⁷

What are we to make of all this? What were Laud's motivations? Was he intent upon the promulgation of an Arminian agenda? We have examined the definition of Arminianism, and Laud certainly accepted the belief that Christ died for all men, but he maintained that this doctrine was not specifically Arminian, but rather the 'constant Doctrine of the Catholick Church in all Ages, and no Error of Arminius: and are the express words of Scripture it self, in more places than one'.⁴¹⁸ The list of accusations brought against Laud at his trial includes his alleged upholding of Arminian opinions, said to be proved by his possession of books by the controversial Montague. Does this render him an Arminian?, he asks:

I have Bellarmine in my Study; Therefore I am a Papist: Or I have the Alcaron in my Study; Therefore I am a Turk, is as good an Argument as this; I have Bishop Mountague's Books in my Study; Therefore I am an Arminian. May Mr. Pryn have Books in all kinds in his Study, and may not the Archbishop of Canterbury have them in his?⁴¹⁹

Tyacke and his revisionist critics are probably closer in their understandings of Laud's doctrinal stance than is always apparent. Davies acknowledges that Laud's position on the

⁴¹⁴ Bernard, 'Church of England', pp.196-197

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.197-198

⁴¹⁶ Tyacke, *Aspects*, pp.204-205

⁴¹⁷ Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, p.5, expanded at pp.306-311

⁴¹⁸ Wharton, *History*, p.90

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.364

five points of Calvinism places him somewhere between the two poles. He goes so far as to admit that Laud had a dislike of rigid predestinarianism, which renders him effectually an 'anti-Calvinist' as in Tyacke's definition,⁴²⁰ but, he asserts, 'we do not need the rise of Arminianism (even if Arminianism needed to rise) to explain Laudianism'.⁴²¹ Let us take a closer look now at this controversial prelate himself, and his writings.

Laud was born in Reading in 1573 and graduated BA and MA at St. John's College, Oxford, a Marian foundation that was not entirely purged of its inherited Catholic influence, a college whose 'Protesantisation ... was both a lengthy and a gradual process'.⁴²² The works of his tutor, William Buckeridge (1562-1631), demonstrate a strong emphasis on the sacraments and episcopacy and a taste for Greek patristic literature, all of which became evident in his pupil.⁴²³ Laud was appointed Bishop of St. David's in 1621, and whilst he did visit his diocese twice, in 1622 and 1625, most of his time was spent at Durham House in the Strand, the palatial residence of Neile, then Bishop of Durham, later to become Archbishop of York. Cosin also resided there and, under Neile's patronage, the house became the centre for the intellectual 'Arminian' group in the Church known as 'The Durham House Group', of which set Laud became a part, a party which included Buckeridge as well as Montagu[e], author of the infamous *A Gagg for the New Gospel?*.⁴²⁴

Laud's engagement in controversy, both ecclesiastical and doctrinal, in the first four decades of the seventeenth century is hard to deny, but he refused to accept that his intention was ever to be contentious. Certainly the rhetoric of his writings rarely reflects the force of his concerns, and written works by Laud are lacking in abundance anyway. That he preached frequently is evident from his diary, but of his sermons there are but seven available in print.⁴²⁵ Laud's *Daily Office*⁴²⁶ show him to be a deeply religious man, theologically aware, and devotedly committed to a single English national Church, but the sermons reflect Laud's engagement in affairs of state and his support for royal authority: a high view of the relationship between state and Church:

Both Commonwealth and Church are collective bodies, made up of many into one; and both are so near allyed, that the one, the Church, can never subsist but in the other, the Commonwealth ... the Church can have no being but in the Commonwealth ... and the Commonwealth can have no blessed and happy being, but by the Church.⁴²⁷

⁴²⁰ Davies, *Caroline Captivity*, p.95

⁴²¹ *Ibid.*, pp.50-51

⁴²² See, Cromartie, 'Mind', pp.76-77

⁴²³ Milton, 'Laud'

⁴²⁴ Montagu[e], *Gagg*

⁴²⁵ Laud, *Seven Sermons*

⁴²⁶ Laud, *Daily Office*

⁴²⁷ Laud, *Seven Sermons*, pp.6-7

Here we find little by way of controversial engagement with theological opponents, supporting the view that Laud resisted public debate on issues of ecclesiastical and doctrinal contention.⁴²⁸

The first of Laud's published works that can be considered contentious was *Conference*,⁴²⁹ which is the record of his debate with the Jesuit, John Percy — *alias*, Fisher — (1569-1641), which took place on May 24, 1622, a work in which he did not 'spare to speake Necessary Truth, out of too much Love of Peace'.⁴³⁰ Much of this tract is not specifically relevant to this thesis, but of interest is his concern to refute the argument that Protestants, and the Church of England in particular, are in a state of schism from 'The Church'. Fisher's cunning, he argues, is to assert that 'the whole Church ... is the Romane, and those parts of Christendome, which subject themselves to the Romane Bishop. All other parts of Christendome are in Heresie, and Schisme'. Laud counters the Jesuit's argument by maintaining that the Church is not an institution: the whole Church, the 'Holy Catholic Church' of the creeds, is the Church militant on earth and triumphant in heaven. This 'Church is constituted of men', and, as the Apostle Paul declares in Romans 11, and Augustine taught us, the true Church 'is a Body Collective made up of the spirituall seed of Abraham'.⁴³¹ In this regard, it could be argued, he sided with the Puritan stance as against Fisher's view: the Church is not a visible organisation defined in terms of its ecclesiastical structure, but is an invisible, spiritual Church encompassing all Christian believers, known only to God. But when it comes to formulation of truth he argued, the Church must take its place alongside Scripture. Rome sets the Church above Scripture whilst, at the other extreme, Scripture is set up 'to the neglect and Contempt of the Church'.⁴³² Scripture itself teaches men to honour both, Laud insisted: the Church is the final arbiter of divine verities contained in Scripture.

Following the accession of Charles to the throne, Laud's elevation was rapid. Nominated Bishop of Bath and Wells in 1626 he was, in 1627, appointed a Privy Councillor and became Bishop of London in 1628, giving him immense power in the Church well before he became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1633. He was elected, by a small majority, Chancellor of the University of Oxford in 1630, a responsibility in which he took a lively interest, actively prosecuting public disorder and nonconformity in every form, requiring strict adherence to University regulations, including the prohibition of public

⁴²⁸ Laud, *Works*, I, Editor's preface, p.vii.

⁴²⁹ Laud, *Conference*

⁴³⁰ *Ibid.*, Preface to his sacred Majesty, unpaginated

⁴³¹ *Ibid.*, pp.140-141

⁴³² *Ibid.*, Preface to his sacred Majesty, unpaginated

discussion of Calvinist and Arminian doctrine, insisting on impartiality in the treatment of offenders on both sides.⁴³³

A zeal for unity was an overriding principle for Laud, a standard which he sought to enforce by uniformity in belief and practice. 'Unity cannot long continue in the Church, where Uniformity is shut out at the Church-Door',⁴³⁴ he argued, but it was the very attempt to enforce uniformity that undermined the cause of unity. As an uncompromising advocate of episcopal authority, Laud pursued a campaign which rode on the back of an ecclesiastical discipline which endorsed earlier assertions by Bancroft (Archbishop of Canterbury, 1604-10) who, in a sermon at Paul's Cross on February 9, 1588/9, had proclaimed that the government of the Church by bishops was ordained by God for all time, an essential requisite in a true Church.⁴³⁵ Whilst developing Bancroft's theory of episcopacy, Laud argued against his opponents that the office of bishop has precedent, both ancient and Apostolic:

A great 'Trouble 'tis to them that wee maintaine that our Calling of Bishops is *Jure divino*, by divine Right: ... And I say farther, that from the Apostles times, in all ages, in all places, the Church of Christ was governed by Bishops; and Lay-Elders never heard of, till Calvin's new-fangled Device at Geneva.⁴³⁶

Wood maintains that this insistence on the 'authority of the episcopacy' was the key to Laud's policy, uniting it with a stress on Patristic Christology, and on the real presence in the Eucharist. It was an innovation that was contrary to Whitgift's and Hooker's assertion that no form of Church government was specifically set forth in Scripture: following Luther and Calvin, they were prepared to follow Church tradition where it was not contrary to Scripture. Hooker regarded episcopal ordering as established for the *bene esse* — the well-being — not for the *esse* — the being — of the Church.⁴³⁷ For Laud the bishop's divine right to authority rendered him the only governor in the Church, including the local church. Parish clergy were but curates, a view which was diametrically opposed to the Presbyterian insistence on the rights of the pastor over his flock.

Laud's prescriptive pursuit of unity through imposed uniformity was inevitably to prove a major cause of disunity. His push for uniformity of worship in every church drove a wedge between the Episcopal party and the Puritans, 'provok[ing] the more determined

⁴³³ Laud, *Works*, V, p.48

⁴³⁴ Wharton, *History*, p.224

⁴³⁵ Cross, *Church and People*, p.154. Cargill Thompson doubts whether Bancroft's sermon explicitly advocated episcopal rule, *jure divino*. See, Cargill Thompson, 'Reconsideration', pp.253-256

⁴³⁶ Laud, *Speech*, p.7

⁴³⁷ Wood, *Unity*, pp.65-67, and Atkinson, *Hooker*, p.131

preachers to a bolder stand and extremists to more active agitation'.⁴³⁸ The rising emphasis on ritualised worship was centred not on preaching but on the sacraments, on the communion table, now called the altar, on church buildings and a liturgy, both enhanced to display the 'beauty of holiness' in the reverent worship of God; all these were considered novelties by his opponents. The church building was seen by Laud as the house of prayer, having an inherent holiness as the place where the people of God meet, pray and sing the praises of God. It becomes holy because there Christ keeps his promise to meet with us, there sacred meetings are held, there the Church meets to participate in Word and Sacrament. That the church building is the house of God becomes evident above all because it is in this holy place that God is present in the body and blood of Christ, in the Eucharist.⁴³⁹ Laud insists that he is not introducing innovations,

but Restaurations of the ancient approved Ceremonies, in, and from the beginning of the Reformation, and settled either by Law or Custom; till the Faction of such as now openly and avowedly separate from the Church of England, did oppose them.⁴⁴⁰

Laud's concern was not only for the restoration and the adornment of public worship for the glory of God; he had the individual worshipper in mind, for if outward reverence be neglected, he argued, then personal godliness will suffer along with it:

All that I laboured for ... was, that the external Worship of God in this Church, might be kept up in Uniformity and Decency, and in some Beauty of Holiness. And this the rather, because first I found that with the Contempt of the Outward Worship of God, the Inward fell away apace, and Profaneness began boldly to shew it self.⁴⁴¹

Laud further maintained that the neglect and deterioration of church buildings under the care of those that did not honour them was a travesty, a cause for shame and ignominy:

The Romanists have been apt to say, The houses of God could not be suffered to lie so Nastily, ... were the True worship of God observed in them. ... the Inward Worship of the Heart is the Great Service of God, ... But the External worship of God in His Church is the Great Witness to the World that Our hearts stand right.⁴⁴²

The king shared Laud's concern, issuing on October 11, 1629, 'charge and command [to] all Archbishops and Bishops, that they take special care of the repairing and upholding' of church buildings, 'and that the Judges be requir'd not to interrupt this good Work'.⁴⁴³ The problem that this presented to the Puritan was not so much the emphasis that was being

⁴³⁸ Toon, *Puritans*, p.33

⁴³⁹ Davies, *Caroline Captivity*, pp.53-54, and Laud, *Speech*, pp.47-48

⁴⁴⁰ Laud, *History*, p.156

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴² Laud, *Conference*, Epistle dedicatory, unpaginated

⁴⁴³ Rushworth, *Historical Collections*, unpaginated

placed upon the good upkeep of buildings, but that Laud's adornments and enhanced ritualism had the force of unacceptable symbolism, even idolatry. Within these refurbished churches preaching now took second place to the sacraments. High on the Laudian agenda was an exalted view of the 'altar', which he set above the pulpit:

The altar is the greatest place of God's residence upon earth, greater than the pulpit; for there 'tis *Hoc est corpus meum*, 'This is my body; but in the other it is at most *Hoc est verbum meum*, 'This is my word. And a greater Reverence (no doubt) is due to the Body then due to the Word of our Lord.⁴⁴⁴

Laud's high sacramental view of the Eucharist required the repositioning of the communion table 'to keepe it from profanation', protected by a rail one yard in height. In a return to — in his understanding — its traditional setting, the altar 'ought to stand at the upper end of the Quire, North and South, or Altar-wise', which is the practice of Queen Elizabeth, and the rule enforced 'by the Practice and by the Command and Canon of the Church of England ... as tis plaine by the last Injunction of the Queene, [presumably the last of the 1559 Injunctions] ... the words of the Injunction are so plaine, as they can admit of no shift'.⁴⁴⁵ In so saying Laud conveniently overlooked the Injunction's qualification to this demand: 'saving when the communion of the Sacrament is to be distributed; at which time the same shall be so placed in good sort within the chancel',⁴⁴⁶ an arrangement which, interestingly, is a practice commonly to be found in many present day cathedrals and churches. Indeed, there was no parliamentary statute, nor an ecclesiastical canon in place, specifically ordering the removal of the Communion Table to the east end of the church. Laudians insisted that these were the practices of the Church of England in its royal chapels and cathedrals, and the parish church should conform to the cathedral, not the other way round, but, as A. Tindal Hart maintains, their 'arguments ... were based ... entirely upon the expediency and decency of the thing itself',⁴⁴⁷ not upon statute. As to the theological implications, Davies maintains that Laud's imposition of a north-south altar, and his restraint on preaching, are not to be seen as manifestations of Arminianism but rather of a desire for a counter-reformation in the Church.⁴⁴⁸ Nonetheless, as Fincham and Tyacke argue, the altar had become a symbol of the great divide, the 'vital battleground ... among protestants ... about sacramental theology, imagery, sanctity, and reverence'.⁴⁴⁹

John Milton, though no Calvinist, was appalled:

⁴⁴⁴ Laud, *Speech*, p.47

⁴⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.53-57

⁴⁴⁶ 'Injunctions of 1559', pp.439-440

⁴⁴⁷ Laud, *Speech*, p.52, and Tindal Hart, *Country Clergy*, p.93

⁴⁴⁸ Davies, *Caroline Captivity*, p.16

⁴⁴⁹ Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, p.1

The table of communion [has] now become a table of separation [which] stands like an exalted platform upon the brow of the choir, fortified with bulwark and barricade, to keep off the profane touch of the laics, whilst the obscene, and surfeited priest scruples not to paw, and mammock⁴⁵⁰ the sacramental bread, as familiarly as his tavern biscuit.⁴⁵¹

Milton was not alone. Laud's policy — in the pursuit of which he made full use of the Court of High Commission and Star Chamber⁴⁵² — gave rise to strong reaction in many parishes, not only amongst Puritans. In his research into the effect of Laud's altar policy in the Northern Province Andrew Foster finds 'evidence of widespread resistance in the localities [which] corroborates the impression that this was one of the most hated aspects of church policy in the 1630s'.⁴⁵³ In his annual report for 1633 Archbishop Neile is recorded as concluding: 'It was scarcely found in any place that the communion table was placed in such a sort as that it might appear it was in any whit respected'.⁴⁵⁴

By 1641 the Long Parliament was complaining that Laud had imposed 'Romanising' rituals, including candlesticks, crucifixes, images, bowing to the east, penance, prayers for the dead, private confession and the assertion that a sacrifice was offered upon the altar.⁴⁵⁵ Owen condemned Laudian worship for its use of 'paintings, crossings, crucifixes, bowings, cringings, Altars, Tapers, Wafers, Organs, Anthems, Letany, Rails, Images, Copes, vestments; what were they, but Roman varnish'.⁴⁵⁶ In doctrine, the apostasy was considered equally dramatic, with the introduction of

the Divinity of Episcopacy, auricular confession, free-will, predestination on faith, yea works fore-seen, ... justification by works, falling from grace, authority of a Church, which none knew what it was, Canonically obedience, holinesse of Churches, and the like innumerable.⁴⁵⁷

Against such accusations Laud argued that his purpose was to maintain uniform orthodoxy in the national Church:

I can say it clearly and truly, ... I have done nothing as a Prelate, ... but with a single heart and with a sincere intention for the good Government and Honour of the Church, and the maintenance of the Orthodox Truth and Religion of Christ professed, established and maintained in this Church of England.⁴⁵⁸

⁴⁵⁰ 'mammock', ? to tear, or shred.

⁴⁵¹ Milton, *Of Reformation*, p.21

⁴⁵² Toon, *Puritans*, p.33

⁴⁵³ Foster, 'Church Policies', p.203

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁵ Wood, *Unity*, p.64

⁴⁵⁶ Owen, *Vision*, p.29

⁴⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁸ Laud, *Speech*, p.4

Laud vigorously defended his pursuit of reverence in Church worship, this to include bodily worship. Bowing to the altar he insisted was in response to biblical injunction. Against Puritan accusations he argued,

One thing sticks much in their Stomacks, and they call it an Innovation ... and that is, bowing, or doing Reverence at our first coming into the Church, or at our nearer Approaches to the Holy Table, or the Altar, ... in which they will needs have it, that we worship the Holy Table, ... To this I answer: First, That God forbid we should worship any thing but God Himselfe.⁴⁵⁹

Laud insisted that bodily reverence was not an innovation, rather an ancient tradition practised from biblical times. Citing Num. 20: 6, 2 Chron. 29: 29, and Psalm 95: 6, where ‘David calls the People to it [worship] with a Venite, O come let us worship, & fall down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker’, Laud pressed home his argument: ‘in all these places (I pray mark it) tis bodily worship’.⁴⁶⁰ He considered himself bound to worship God not only with his soul, but with his body, and he was confounded to find it considered superstition for anyone to ‘come with more reverence into a Church then a Tinker and his Bitch [might] come into an Ale-house’, a ‘homely comparison’ he acknowledged, but ‘the prophaneness of the times, makes me speake of it’.⁴⁶¹

Anthony Milton reminds us that the difficulty in reconstructing a Laudian rationale lies in the singular absence of written justification by Laud himself, and by those who advocated his policies. ‘One cannot find a single prominent Laudian bishop writing justification of the policies being implemented’.⁴⁶² In Milton’s view it is in the writings of the ‘so-called “Durham House Group”’⁴⁶³ that we best find an adequate expression of Laudianism. This ‘court-centred group of divines’, he claims, ‘considered themselves to be an embattled minority, involved in a struggle for survival with a Calvinist establishment ... [which remained] indulgent towards Puritan activities and doctrines’.⁴⁶⁴ But as Milton also points out, whilst it is possible to reconstruct their world-view, it is ‘more difficult to understand the rationale behind these policies’ given that they had little to say on the subject.⁴⁶⁵ Hence the difficulty we find in positively defining their theological stance.

Though Laud’s interpretations contrasted profoundly, his rule of faith replicated that of the Puritans. His position on Scripture could scarcely be more explicit: ‘not the Church of England only, but all Protestants, agree most truly and most strongly in this, “That the

⁴⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p.43

⁴⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.43-4

⁴⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp.46-47

⁴⁶² Milton, ‘Laudianism’, p.163

⁴⁶³ See above, p.114

⁴⁶⁴ Milton, ‘Laudianism’, p.162

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p.163

Scripture is sufficient to salvation, and contains in it all things necessary to it.”⁴⁶⁶ The Bible is the supreme authority in all matters of faith and practice, and in his dispute with Fisher the Jesuit he insists: ‘the Booke of God, which we honour as His Word, is [the] necessary Revelation of God and His Truth, which must, and alone is able to, leade us in the way to our eternall Blessednesse’.⁴⁶⁷ The Scriptures are accepted as the Word of God, the authors are acknowledged as divinely inspired, and this has been the faith of the Church from the time of the Apostles.⁴⁶⁸ Human reason is legitimate in the interpretation of the divine revelation but has to be in subjection to it. ‘For the Word of God, and the Booke containing it, refuse not to bee weighed by Reason’.⁴⁶⁹

There is, nonetheless, this distinction between Laudian and Reformed hermeneutical methodology. The Reformed perception is that Scripture is self-authenticating and self-interpreting, a stance that can be problematic given the plethora of interpretations that result in practice. Laudians relied on tradition, on patristics, on the teachings of those closest to the apostles, for arbitration on issues of Scriptural interpretation.⁴⁷⁰

What conclusions can we draw from Laud’s involvement in controversy? It is my assertion that though he and his supporters, and his opponents, rigidly maintained divergent and divisive theological opinions, Laudians and, as we shall see, Puritans were both relying on Scripture as the ultimate authority for their diverse doctrinal standpoints. This presented a mutually exclusive dichotomy which they failed to resolve and the Church has been confronted with the same powerful implications in the field of hermeneutics in every century: who is to decide, and on what basis, which interpretations are orthodox? It was, I shall argue, a failure to address — let alone resolve — questions of this nature that caused the divisions of 1662. The acknowledgement that Scripture is the revelation of God and the only foundation for faith and practice is one thing, but that is no guarantee of unanimity in belief, nor does it certify the validity of any particular doctrinal interpretation. What happens when those who claim — and faithfully adhere to — the *sola scriptura* principle are unable to reach agreement on what the Scriptures teach us? The difficulties are heightened when one, both, or all sides insist that their standpoint is not open for debate. As we proceed to examine the standpoint of other Conformists, as opposed to that of the Nonconformists, we shall observe that when the issues in contention are exclusively maintained, then division is perceived as the only option.

⁴⁶⁶ Laud, *Conference*, p.52

⁴⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p.113

⁴⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p.107

⁴⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p.75

⁴⁷⁰ Davies, *Caroline Captivity*, p.52

b. Jeremy Taylor and moral theology

My purpose is not to dispute, but to persuade; not to confute anyone, but to instruct those that need; not to make a noise, but to excite devotion.

Jeremy Taylor⁴⁷¹

In this section I intend to engage with the polemical works and theology of one of Laud's protégés, Jeremy Taylor. Said by his biographer, C.J. Stranks, to have been a 'man ... as gracious as his works',⁴⁷² Taylor, born in 1613, came to the attention of Laud when, aged just twenty-one, he preached a sermon at St. Paul's, where he was already a lecturer. According to Bishop George Rust (1628-1670),⁴⁷³ Laud judged the sermon to be 'beyond exception and beyond imitation'.⁴⁷⁴ Laud's only complaint was that he considered Taylor too young. Taylor responded by humbly begging Laud's pardon, promising that if he should live then he would mend his fault.⁴⁷⁵ Presented by Laud to a fellowship at All Souls College, Oxford in 1635, Taylor's first significant entry into the realm of controversy was in 1642 when we find him in that city in support of the king.⁴⁷⁶ There he published, by the king's command, *Episcopacy Asserted*, following which Charles conferred on him, by royal mandate, the degree of Doctor of Divinity.⁴⁷⁷

Taylor was destined to live right through the eventful years of civil strife and the Commonwealth, and much of his published work, often controversial, appeared during this period. *Episcopacy Asserted* was not only a defence of episcopacy, it was an attack on those whose intent was to demolish it. Relying heavily on the record of the early Church and the sayings of the early Church Fathers he claimed that the abolition of episcopacy was the work of Antichrist and the forerunner of the great apostasy.⁴⁷⁸ He maintained the standard Conformist argument that episcopacy and royalty are bound together in a mutual dependence:

⁴⁷¹ Taylor, *Worthy Communicant*, 'Introduction'

⁴⁷² Stranks, *Taylor*, p.273

⁴⁷³ George Rust, Bishop of Dromore, 1667-70. A Cambridge Platonist, he defended the use of reason in religion: Parkin, 'Rust'

⁴⁷⁴ Rust, *Funeral Sermon*, p.27

⁴⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷⁶ Fincham and Tyacke (*Altars Restored*, p.148) have Taylor as writing *On the Reverence due to the Altar* earlier, 'probably ... in the late 1630s', a piece only discovered and published in 1848. I have not yet had access to this work, but a piece under the same title appears at: <http://anglicanhistory.org/taylor/reverence.html>, given there as under Taylor's authorship as Bishop of Down and Connor (incumbent, 1661-1667). It is a defence of bodily worship in church, especially towards the altar.

⁴⁷⁷ Taylor, *Episcopacy*, title page, and Heber, 'Life of Taylor', pp.xxiii-xxiv

⁴⁷⁸ Taylor, *Episcopacy*, pp.3-4

The interest of the Bishops is conjunct with the prosperity of the King, besides the interest of their own securitie ... the Bishops duty to the King derives it selfe from a higher fountaine. For it is one of the maine excellencies in Christianity, that it advances the State, and well being of Monarchies, and Bodies Politique.⁴⁷⁹

Taylor follows Hooker's argument that the Puritan innovations have no support in the Church's history, or from the Bible. From the earliest times the Church held to an order of authority established above that of the parish priest.⁴⁸⁰ In 1663 he supplemented this argument: before 'the men of Geneva turned their Bishop out of doors, ... there was no Church till then was ever Governed without an Apostle or a Bishop'.⁴⁸¹ Turning the Puritan reliance on biblical authority against them, Taylor insisted that it is their new Presbyterian forms, introduced after sixteen-hundred years of episcopal rule, not episcopacy, which stands in need of scriptural validation:

I hope the adversaries of Episcopacy, that are so punctuall to pitch all upon Scripture ground, will be sure to produce cleare Scripture for so maine a part of Christianity, as is the forme of the Government of Christs Church.⁴⁸²

Episcopacy, argued Taylor, is authenticated by Scripture. Christ himself established the office of bishop, appointing bishops as his chosen pastors and rulers, granting them jurisdiction over the Church when he designated Peter as the rock on which the Church was to be built,⁴⁸³ and through him on to the apostles, granting them powers to loose, bind, remit and retain sins.⁴⁸⁴ This power is passed to their successors in all ages, a truth well established by the early Church Fathers, powers of 'Preaching, Baptizing, Consecrating, Ordaining, and Governing ... [all] necessary for the perpetuating of a Church'.⁴⁸⁵ Within episcopacy the apostolic succession is an essential concept for Taylor. Christ's institution of government in his Church, first committed to the Apostles, grants them authority to appoint successors.⁴⁸⁶ Taylor's view of episcopacy, again in contrast to Whitgift's and Hooker's declaration that no form of Church government is prescribed in Scripture, is that the established hierarchy of bishops, set over the rest of the clergy, has been the apostolic faith and practice of the Church ever since. Presbyterian ordination was invalid:

The summe is this. If the Canons, and Sanctions Apostolicall, if the decrees of eight famous Councells in Christendome ... if the constant successive Acts of the famous Martyr Bishops of Rome making ordinations ... the dogmaticall resolution of so many Fathers ... all

⁴⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, Preface

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p.27

⁴⁸¹ Taylor, *Ebdomas embolimaïos*, p.45

⁴⁸² Taylor, *Episcopacy*, p.7

⁴⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp.54-55

⁴⁸⁴ Matthew 18.18 and John 20.21-23

⁴⁸⁵ Taylor, *Episcopacy*, p.14

⁴⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.7, and 12-13

appropriating ordinations to the Bishops hand: if the constant voice of Christendome, declaring ordinations made by Presbyters, to be null, and voide in the nature of the thing ... then it is evident that the power, and order of Bishops is greater than the power, and order of Presbyters.⁴⁸⁷

In 1646, at the height of Puritan dominance, Taylor published *Ex Tempore*, in which he contested the Puritan assertion that prayer should be spontaneous. The Puritan *Directory for ... Publique Worship*, published on January 4, 1644/5, advocated the avoidance of all 'deliberation' in prayer, whereas Taylor argued that it is better to be deliberate, as one would in a letter or in the preparation of a lecture. *Ex tempore* prayer Taylor considered to be a 'pretence of the Spirit'.⁴⁸⁸ He denied that prayer book liturgies 'confine the blessed Spirit'. If the *Book of Common Prayer* has many errors and inconveniences, 'how much more and with how much greater reason may we all dread the inconveniences and disorders of *ex tempore* and "conceived" prayers, where ... there is neither conjunction of heads, nor premeditation, nor industry, nor method, nor art'.⁴⁸⁹ When it comes to *ex tempore* prayer, 'an unlearned man is not to be trusted, and a wise man dare not trust himselfe; he that is ignorant cannot, he that is knowing will not'.⁴⁹⁰

Although suffering two periods of imprisonment for his writings, in 1654-5 and 1657-8, Taylor continued his involvement in religious contention in print. Before this, in 1648, his book *Treatises: Liberty of Prophesying* had been published at a time when powerful radical religious and political debate was at its height. It was in this context that Taylor, somewhat uniquely for a Conformist, ventured his views in favour of toleration in religion. Written from the relative security of the Welsh countryside at Golden Grove, the palatial residence of the Second Earl of Carbery, Taylor refuted the assertion that dissent and debate on religious matters was a threat to society:

The experience which Christendom hath had in this last age is argument enough that toleration of differing opinions is so far from disturbing the public peace or destroying the interest of princes and commonwealths, that it does advantage to the public.⁴⁹¹

In this affirmation he was in tune with John Milton's 'free and lawful debate ... of what opinion soever, disputable by scripture'.⁴⁹² It is an unreasonable thing to persecute those of differing opinion, Taylor argued. 'Force in matters of opinion can doe no good, but is very

⁴⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.197-198

⁴⁸⁸ Taylor, *Prayer*, Title page

⁴⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p.34

⁴⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.38

⁴⁹¹ Taylor, *Treatises*, p.21

⁴⁹² Milton, *Civil Power*, p.22

apt to doe hurt; for no man can change his opinion when he will'.⁴⁹³ 'Those in error should be disputed, but not by corporal punishment: 'let it be done by such means as are proper instruments of their suppression ... by preaching and disputation ... by charity and sweetness, by holiness of life, assiduity of exhortation, by the word of God and prayer'.⁴⁹⁴ Not all unorthodox opinion is heretical. 'Only let not men be hasty in calling every dislik'd opinion by the name of Heresy ... let them use the erring person like a brother, not beat him like a dog, or convince him with a gibbet, or vex him out of his understanding and perswasions'.⁴⁹⁵

In a review of Taylor's views on toleration, Anthony Milton maintains that Taylor's assertion was that for any religion to be tolerated, it 'should not represent a political threat ... or promote impiety'. Nonetheless, within the Church he was not prepared to permit liberty to worship differently: the set liturgy had to be followed. "To comply with weak consciences" would be the overthrow of all discipline. Laws would be no laws at all if the denying of them were left as a matter of conscience.⁴⁹⁶ Milton concludes that "Taylor's arguments in *Liberty of Prophesying* ... would seem to anticipate hostility to proposals for comprehension in the Restoration church".⁴⁹⁷

Taylor was not always to follow his own advice. Presbyterians he considered no more part of the Church of England than the Irish can be called 'English'.⁴⁹⁸ In Taylor's dealings with the Irish Presbyterians after the Restoration, Martin Lewis, in his comparison of the ministry of Taylor and Baxter, maintains that,

The Bishop of Dromore was indefatigable in his diocesan duties, ... in the day of victory he failed to carry into practice the large and tolerant principles for which he had pleaded in the day of adversity. The rigorous measures he adopted to silence the resolute Presbyterians of Ulster ill became the author of *The Liberty of Prophesying*.⁴⁹⁹

Against this view, it could be argued that his reaction was understandable given the opposition he experienced from a bitter Irish Presbytery which refused even to speak to him following his appointment in 1660 as bishop. They considered that Taylor was a Socian, that he denied original sin, and that he was an Arminian, and thereby he was considered to be a heretic.⁵⁰⁰ They preached from their pulpits that the Anglican service book was hatched in hell by the devil and, Margaret Gest maintains, even though Taylor

⁴⁹³ Taylor, *Treatises*, pp.199-200

⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.28

⁴⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.29

⁴⁹⁶ Milton, 'Alternatives', p.158

⁴⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.160

⁴⁹⁸ Taylor, *UnumNecessarium*, 'Preface', unpaginated

⁴⁹⁹ Lewis, *Taylor and Baxter*, p.72

⁵⁰⁰ Stranks, *Taylor*, p.229

'had invited these clergy to friendly conferences and called upon them personally, ... [they] did not cease, ... to resound with invectives against Anglicans and Anglican liturgy, even with threats of bloodshed'.⁵⁰¹

None of the advocates of toleration, including Taylor, were prepared to allow the acceptance of 'error' on an equal footing: any concession granted was no more than the right to be wrong. Yet, argued Taylor, none can claim to see the truth perfectly, for 'since "we know in part and prophesy in part", and ... "we now see through a glass darkly", we should not despise or condemn persons not so knowing as ourselves'.⁵⁰² But, when it came to the decisive moment the advocates of toleration on both sides found it beyond their capacity to remain united with those with whom they differed. Their convictions were not permitted their logical conclusion. So Taylor, in his bishopric, proceeded to eject thirty-six nonconforming Presbyterians from their parishes filling the vacancies with English clergymen, resulting in great bitterness among the deprived.⁵⁰³

Taylor was a prolific author, and a series of majestic devotional — rather than polemical — works followed, including *Great Exemplar* (1649), which is the first English life of Christ, and ran into eight editions before the end of the seventeenth century;⁵⁰⁴ *Holy Living* (1650); *Holy Dying* (1651); and *The Golden Grove* (1654/5), which is an assortment of devotional reflections. *Holy Living*, which had at least fourteen editions in the century, and *Holy Dying*, twenty-one, were books that long remained popular, retaining a wide spectrum of readership, with eighteenth-century Evangelicals, including the Wesleys, and the nineteenth-century Tractarians reading them enthusiastically. However, not all his works proved to be as popular. His *magnum opus*, the *Ductor Dubitantium* (1660), offered as a Protestant 'Rule of Conscience' and amounting to almost 1,400 pages, is considered by Hugh Ross Williamson to be now of little value. 'It is as useless to the casuist of today as it is tedious to the general reader'.⁵⁰⁵ Newman is said to have marvelled at 'how weak a thread of thoughts' connected the book's quotations and references.⁵⁰⁶

Taylor remained, in spite of accusations to the contrary, resolutely anti-Roman Catholic, publishing in 1653 his *Real Presence* following a dispute with the Jesuit, John Sarjeant (dates unknown), on the doctrine of the eucharist, and later, when Lord Bishop of Down and Connor, a *Dissuasive of Popery to the People of Ireland*, in two volumes, (1664 and

⁵⁰¹ Gest, *House of Understanding*, p.25

⁵⁰² Taylor, *Treatises*, Epistle Dedicatory, unpaginated, citing I Corinthians 13: 9 and 13.

⁵⁰³ Brown, *Taylor*, pp.31-33

⁵⁰⁴ McAdoo, *First of its kind*, p.viii

⁵⁰⁵ Williamson, *Taylor*, p.129

⁵⁰⁶ Cited by Dewar, *Moral Theology*, p.44

1667). Bishop Duppa's endorsement of Taylor's work can be seen in his recommendation of *Real Presence* to Sir Justinian Isham (1611-1675):

You will find it to be a discourse occasioned by a conference he had with a Jesuit, against whom he hath argued with so much sharpness as if all his study had been in controversies, and yet hath framed his bookes of devotion so as if he understood nothing of them.⁵⁰⁷

Duppa also reminds us that Taylor was not prepared to remain silent in the face of opposition. Whilst in London in 1654 to supervise the publication of his work, 'he was not suffer'd to be in quiet. Preach he must, both in season and out of season, till at last being wearied out with it, he is retired back to the Golden Grove'.⁵⁰⁸

In 1655 Taylor resumed his polemical publications with *Unum Necessarium*, a book in which he attacks the orthodox doctrine of original sin. In it, and in *Deus Justificatus* (1656), a response to the resultant criticism from both Puritan and Conformist opinion, Taylor argued that we are not evil from birth. Original sin renders us prone to sin but does not leave us congenitally guilty before God and, in any event, 'original sin is remitted in baptism ... that which came without our own consent is also to be taken off without it'.⁵⁰⁹ Taylor denied that there is any need to repent of our original sin and our concupiscence.⁵¹⁰ We shall only ever be judged for our own sin, not for the sin of Adam, and our liberty of choice, whether to do good or evil, has not been lost, otherwise how can we be culpable? After all, 'could we prevent the sin of Adam? Could we hinder it? Were we ever asked?'⁵¹¹

Whilst direct reference to the Calvinist/Arminian dispute is rare, his position on original sin reflects an Arminian stance. He expressed abhorrence at the logical corollary of Calvinist dogma that God becomes the author of our sin:

If God decrees us to be born sinners, then he makes us to be sinners; and then where is His goodness?
If God does damn any for that, He damns us for what we could not help, and for what Himself did; and then where is His justice?
If God sentences us to that damnation which He cannot in justice inflict, where is His wisdom?
... If God chooseth the death of so many millions of persons who are no sinners upon their own stock, and yet swears that He does not love the death of a sinner ... how can that be credible?⁵¹²

Taylor's complaint against Calvinist scholars was that they make men and women into slaves over whom God holds absolute power as to their lives from birth, predestines all

⁵⁰⁷ Isham, *Duppa*, p.75, cited by Spurr, 'Duppa'

⁵⁰⁸ Isham, *Duppa*, p.88

⁵⁰⁹ Taylor, *Unum Necessarium*, p.386

⁵¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Preface

⁵¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.345

⁵¹² Taylor, *Deus Justificatus*, pp.95-97

their actions both good and evil, and their final destination. Certainly he was gracious enough to save a few and that absolutely, but the rest he damns eternally ‘only because he pleased’. Taylor was adamant:

This bloody and horrible opinion ... [leads] directly to the dishonour of God, charging on Him alone that He is the cause of men’s sins on earth, and of men’s eternal torment in hell ... it makes Him more cruel to men than good men can be to dogs and sheep; it makes Him give the final sentence of hell without any pretence ... of justice.⁵¹³

So spoke, in trenchant terms, Jeremy Taylor, a man whose godliness and devotion to God and the Scriptures it is hard to deny, a fidelity the equal of those who opposed him. As Taylor himself observed: ‘the truth is, ... men doe not learn their doctrines from Scripture, but come to the understanding of Scripture with preconceptions and ideas of doctrines of their own ... There are sixteen severall opinions concerning originall sinne; and as many definitions of the Sacraments as there are Sects of men that disagree about them’.⁵¹⁴ Taylor — who had his own ‘preconceptions and ideas of doctrines’ — confronts us, once again, with the incongruity: godliness and faithfulness to Scripture do not necessarily lead either to agreement on Christian dogmatics or to the toleration of conflicting opinions.

Published in 1651, and again in 1655, Taylor’s *Office Ministerial* is an expression of his high view of the ordained priestly office, only ever to be exercised under episcopal authority and appointment. Such ministry is reserved for select persons, sanctified, set apart from ordinary Christians, ordained by the Holy Ghost through the bishop, thereby ‘made Ministers of the Gospel, Stewards of all its mysteries, the Light, the Salt of the earth, the Shepherds of the flock, [and the] Curates of souls’.⁵¹⁵ The preaching of the Gospel is given only to those who are appointed to the task. The call to go into all the world and preach the gospel is not a call to all believers.⁵¹⁶ The unlearned are unworthy; it is a responsibility ‘not permitted promiscuously to every person of a confident language and bold fancy’, because ‘there can be no security against all the evil doctrines of the world in a promiscuous unchosen company of Preachers’.⁵¹⁷ The judgement of God is reserved for such, for,

whosoever therefore with unsanctified, that is, with unconsecrated hands, shall dare to officiate in the ministerial office, ... shall kindle a fire, even the wrath of God which shall at least destroy the Sacrifice: his work shall be consumed, and when upon his repentance

⁵¹³ *Ibid.*, pp.23-25

⁵¹⁴ Taylor, *Treatises*, p.80

⁵¹⁵ Taylor, *Office Ministerial*, p.32

⁵¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.12

⁵¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.16

himself escapes, yet it shall be so as by fire, that is, with danger, and loss, and shame, and trouble. For our God is a consuming fire.⁵¹⁸

As for 'lay-elders' and 'lay-judges of causes Ecclesiastical', they are unthinkable. Taylor insisted that they are unheard of in the Early Church, nor are they named in Scripture. The offices are imaginary and 'should be remanded to the place from whence they came, even the lake of Ge[h]enna'.⁵¹⁹ Taylor evinced little sympathy with the radical sects, yet these factions were relying on similar assertions when they argued that Scripture gave little or no support for Taylor's elite class of clergy set over the laity. There is no mention of appointed 'priests' in the New Testament: all believers are priests. There are certainly ministries in the Church, but not offices. There are spiritual gifts, but all Christians have these without exception, all are ordained by the Holy Ghost to a ministry in the Church, a ministry chosen for them. But arguments such as these were no trouble to Taylor in his dispute with the Presbytery, for in that contest both sides maintained that, whether the title be priest or presbyter, they held an office ordained of God, they are a class apart, it is their holy calling. Their particular differences relate to the nature of the ministry they were appointed to exercise: for Taylor, that which constitutes the high office of priesthood cannot be equated with the Puritan notion of a presbyter.

We turn now to that aspect of Taylor's teaching which, though he did not set out to be controversial, can be considered contentious insofar as it represents a move away from classic Reformed theology. Taylor's moral/ascetical theology, or practical divinity, is the discipline which he called 'that part of Theology which is most necessary, in which the life of Christianity, ... the interest of Souls [and] the peace of Christendome' is to be found. 'Nothing is more neglected, more necessary, or more mistaken', he argues.⁵²⁰

Taylor's concept of moral theology springs from his understanding of the Gospel. 'The whole Doctrine of the Gospel', argued Taylor,

is comprehended by the Holy Ghost in these two Summaries, Faith and Repentance. ... The whole design of Christ's coming and the Doctrines of the Gospel being to recover us from a miserable condition, ... from a vicious habitually-depraved life and ungodly manners to the purity of the Sons of God, by the instrument of Repentance.⁵²¹

The primary intent of the Gospel is not to save us from our lost estate, but to remake us into holy people, to restore us to Eden's innocence. Acts of penance will not do; just being 'sorry' is hypocrisy. 'Repentance may be nothing but a word, and Mortification signifies

⁵¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.47-48

⁵¹⁹ Taylor, *Episcopacy*, p.379

⁵²⁰ Taylor, *Unum Necessarium*, 'Preface', unpaginated

⁵²¹ Taylor, 'Discourse IX', pp.197-198

nothing ... a term of Art only, ... nothing relative to practice, or the extermination of ... sin. So that it is no wonder we understand so little of Religion: it is because we are in love with that which destroyes it'.⁵²² Repentance for Taylor is the whole state of the new life, an entire change, a new life of sincere obedience.⁵²³

Repentance includes all that whole practice which is the intire duty of a Christian after he hath been overtaken in a fault. And therefore Repentance first includes a renunciation and abolition of all evil, and then also enjoyns a pursuit of every vertue, and that till they arrive at an habitual confirmation. ... Remember whence thou art fallen, repent, that is, return, and do thy first works.⁵²⁴

Such repentance is essential, and without the rooting out of sin, to be replaced by a life of holiness, there is no forgiveness: 'Peace and Holiness are twin-Sisters; ... which ... every man is bound to follow, and he that does not shall never see God',⁵²⁵ an argument he supported by citing the writer to the Hebrews: 'Follow peace with all men and holiness without which no man may see the Lord'.⁵²⁶ Here is plain biblical evidence:

unless we pursue the state of holiness and Christian communion into which we were baptised when we received the grace of God, we shall fail in the state of grace, and never come to see the glories of the Lord.⁵²⁷

What is required, before ever justification before God can be expected, is a holiness of life, a renunciation of sin not just in the mind, but by action. Taylor's moral theology demands of the individual a piety, an intense personal spirituality, a dutiful devotion to God without which there is no salvation. In so saying he denied the doctrine of final perseverance. We remain in a state of doubt as to our final state: perfect pardon and assurance of salvation are not achievable in this life. We are imperfect, in a perpetual condition of flux, uncertain whether we are accepted of God, for 'we know not whether we have done all that is sufficient to repair the breach ... and it is certain that if every degree of the divine favour be not assured by a holy life, [our sins will] return in as full vigour and clamorous importunity as ever'.⁵²⁸ As McAdoo has it, 'it is a spirituality of responsibility for the new life in co-operation with grace, a spirituality of response to the grace first given in baptism and renewed in prayer and eucharist'. There is nothing vague with Taylor here says McAdoo, there are no blurred images.⁵²⁹ But, as McGee points out, in spite of the emphasis

⁵²² Taylor, *Via Intelligencia*, p.17

⁵²³ McAdoo, *First of its kind*, p.26

⁵²⁴ Taylor, 'Discourse IX', p.210

⁵²⁵ Taylor, *Via Intelligencia*, Preface to the Reader

⁵²⁶ Hebrews 12: 15

⁵²⁷ Taylor, 'Discourse IX', p.202

⁵²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.208-209

⁵²⁹ McAdoo, *First of its kind*, p.78

placed on the need for a sincere conviction of sin and repentance, in all his vast output of devotional works and theological writing, little was said about conversion.⁵³⁰ Grace is received at baptism, and Taylor's understanding of baptism and justification centres on our agreement to the new covenant in which we contract to live a holy life. Only upon fulfilment of these conditions are the rewards of heaven granted.⁵³¹

If his views were controversial then the solution to the dispute, Taylor insisted, is readily available. 'Let us go to the truth itself, to Christ, and he will tell us the easy way of ending all our quarrels ... Christ's way of finding out the truth is by "doing the will of God."'⁵³² Our evil life is the cause of our controversies: it is not possible to understand the will of God unless we are masters of our passions; holiness, the good life is the way to rightly discern God's Word, to discover truth and achieve godly wisdom.⁵³³ This is an assertion that is in direct opposition to Owen's insistence that we are wholly incapable of co-operating with God:

We are not able of our selves without the especial Aid Assistance and Operation of the Spirit of God, in any Measure or Degree to free our selves from this *Pollution* ... to suppose that whatever God requireth of us, that we have Power of our selves to do, is to make the *Cross and Grace of Jesus Christ of none Effect*. Our Duty is our Duty constituted unalterably by the Law of God, whether we have power to perform it or no.⁵³⁴

Yet God still requires holiness of us, our 'Evangelical Obedience' for, as Owen maintains, 'he hath appointed it as the only means whereby we may express our Subjection to him, our Dependance on him, our Fruitfulness and Thankfulness, the only Way of our Communion and [I]ntercourse with him'.⁵³⁵ Owen's motivation translated, for Taylor, into a passion for piety, an obligation to achieve perfection in holiness, an opinion which, when coupled with his views on original sin as expressed in the sixth chapter of *Unum Neccesarium*, rendered him liable to accusations of Pelagian sympathies, a trend in his theology which has been taken up by present day theologians and historians alike.⁵³⁶

Yet, controversial and unconventional as he was in his theology, as seen by his 'godly' opponents in the Reformed camp, it would be difficult to find a man or woman who exemplified the godly way of life as did Taylor in his approach to the Almighty. From among the numerous examples of devotion that he exhibited, we cite *Holy Living*, from his 'First prayers in the Morning as soon as we are dressed':

⁵³⁰ McGee, *Godly Man*, p.57

⁵³¹ Taylor, 'Discourse, IX', pp199-210 and Allison, *Moralism*, p.68, citing Taylor, in Taylor, *Works*, IV, p.267

⁵³² Taylor, *Supplement*, (Sermon VI), p.100

⁵³³ *Ibid.*, p.108

⁵³⁴ Owen, *Holy Spirit*, p.379

⁵³⁵ *Ibid.*, p.414

⁵³⁶ See above, pp.93-94

Fix my thoughts, my hopes, and my desires, upon heaven and heavenly things; teach me to despise the world, to repent me deeply for my sins; give me holy purposes of amendment, and strength and assistances to perform faithfully whatsoever I shall intend piously. Enrich my understanding with an eternal treasure of Divine Truths, that I may know thy will: and thou, who workest in us to will and to do of Thy good pleasure, teach me to obey all Thy commandments, to believe all Thy revelations, and make me partaker of all Thy gracious promises.⁵³⁷

Taylor's writings, particularly his *Holy Living, and Holy Dying*, are justifiably renowned for their emphasis on holiness of life, on 'heavenly things', rather than worldly contention, on prayer rather than argument. His knowledge of Scripture was massive, and compares with any in his day, yet, despite his holiness of character, this very knowledge brought him into areas of contention with contemporary bible scholars of differing persuasions. Taylor lived through crucial years of contention, when his beloved Church was in disrepute and abandonment. Taylor was not to be kept quiet when, in his view, the doctrinal stance of those that opposed his Church were bringing true religion into disgrace, to the detriment of the spiritual wellbeing of its adherents. When, once again, power returned to his establishment Church, Taylor was in no mood for compromise: the purity and standing of the Church had to be restored even though it meant division and persecution of those who, after all, had persecuted him for so long. No doctrinal accommodation could be found, and indeed there appears to be little incentive from rigid Conformists to find such a solution.

c. Henry Hammond and Anglican resistance

Another Conformist of huge influence throughout the Interregnum was Henry Hammond, and it is to his life and work we now turn, a cleric prominent among the defenders of the Church of England during the 1640s and 1650s. It was he, together with like-minded Conformist divines, including Duppa, Sheldon and Thorndike, who were 'at the heart of an extensive and semi-clandestine network of episcopalian clergy and laity ... bound together by their attachment to the old order in church and state'.⁵³⁸ Hammond maintained an uncompromising stance in defence of episcopacy and Conformist liturgy and practice until his untimely death in April 1660, with the Church of England on the verge of restoration to its pre-Civil War power. Chosen in 1642 by Parliament as a delegate to the Westminster Assembly along with other 'Episcopal Divines' including Archbishop Ussher, Hammond refused to attend. Baxter tells us that this was because 'it was not a Legal Convocation, and

⁵³⁷ Taylor, *Holy Living*, pp.46-47

⁵³⁸ Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, p.289

because the King declared himself against it'.⁵³⁹ Baxter, who engaged in controversy with Hammond, nonetheless 'took the Death of Dr. Hammond ... for a very great loss; for his Piety and Wisdom would sure have hindred [*sic*] much of the Violence [oppression?] which after followed'.⁵⁴⁰

Hammond was born in Chertsey, Surrey, in 1605, the youngest son of Dr John Hammond, physician (c.1555–1617), and after attending Eton College was admitted, already proficient in Greek, Latin and the Classics, to Magdalen College, Oxford at the age of thirteen. He graduated BA in 1622, MA in 1625, and was ordained deacon and priest in 1629 by Bishop Richard Corbet (1582-1635) of Oxford. He first preached at Court in 1633, and as a consequence, in the same year, the Earl of Leicester presented him to the living at Penshurst, Kent, where for ten years he is said to have been an exemplary parish priest.⁵⁴¹ A parishioner declared that 'he was a pattern of true Christianity, and I never saw him excelled by any, and I believe I never shall'.⁵⁴² Hammond was a member of Convocation from 1640 and was preferred by Duppa to the archdeaconry of Chichester in 1642. Having become implicated in a failed royalist uprising in Kent in 1643, he sought refuge in Oxford where he became a chaplain to the king the following year.⁵⁴³

1643 was the date of Hammond's first controversial publication, a tract he published anonymously entitled *Of Resisting the Lawfull Magistrate under Colour of Religion*, in which he addresses the question as to how the religious man or woman is to act in dispute with the magistrate when fully convinced that the health and salvation of the soul is at stake. Religion 'is to be every mans supreme care, the prime Jewel in his Cabinet',⁵⁴⁴ he argued, a concession that has to be granted even to those holding to a false religion. 'It cannot, at least in humane consideration, be expected that any man should be lesse carefull of his false Religion (if hee be really perswaded of the truth of it) then any other is of the true'. 'Religion ... cannot be forced or constrained by outward violence'.⁵⁴⁵ His convictions were soon to be put to the test. Should the Christian take up arms in defence of conscience? For though

by Gods providence [war] hath formerly beene timeously [*sic*] restrained, and not broken out to the defaming of our Protestant profession [yet] it seemes now our sinnes are ripe for such a judgement, the land divided into two extreame sinfull parts.⁵⁴⁶

⁵³⁹ Baxter, *Reliquiae*, p.73

⁵⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.208

⁵⁴¹ Packer, *Transformation*, pp.20-21

⁵⁴² *Ibid.*, p.21, citing a letter of Fortunatus Woodgate (1626-?) to William Fullman, May 21, 1660

⁵⁴³ de Quehan, 'Hammond'

⁵⁴⁴ Hammond, *Lawfull Magistrate*, p.3

⁵⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p.3

⁵⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.26

Given that the Church of England and the monarchy were perceived as bound together in a common interest, how should the faithful respond in the face of violent opposition to both, and should the Christian Prince ever use violence against sectarians and Papists? Hammond answered by asserting that from childhood he had imbibed the principle that ‘the Lawes of this Kingdome put no man (no Papists I am sure) to death for Religion. ... I professe,’ he argued, ‘I know no impediment to forbid me to conclude, that in the constitution of our State no warre for Religion is accounted a lawfull warre’. How can it be lawful, he asked, ‘to take the lives of whole multitudes without any enditement’, for at the very least in so doing we ‘endanger ... our own’.⁵⁴⁷ Thus Hammond’s pacific toleration served to exclude the use of violence in the defence of religion, but it would not extend to the toleration of radical belief and practice within the Church.

First published anonymously in 1644, Hammond’s *Practicall Catechisme* proved to be a popular publication reaching twelve editions in forty years, and it remained in use well after the Restoration as a manual for Christian instruction. Whilst it was not intended to be controversial the catechism contains expressions of doctrinal viewpoints considered contentious and they provoked strong reactions, with accusations of heterodoxy and heresy against which Hammond felt bound to respond. In 1647 there appeared a forceful anonymous pamphlet ‘subscribed by Ministers of Christ within the Province of London’.⁵⁴⁸ Among the ‘contrary unsound Opinions, ... abominable errorrs, damnable Heresies, and Horrid Blasphemies’⁵⁴⁹ complained of was Hammond’s alleged assertion advocating universal salvation when he maintained that the ‘shamefull death [of Christ] voluntarily upon the Crosse, [was] to satisfy for the sinne of Adam, and for all the sinnes of all mankinde, to taste death for every man. Heb[rews]. 2. 9’.⁵⁵⁰ In his rejoinder, Hammond insisted that he was not an advocate of universal salvation, but of universal redemption. Christ died for the sins of the whole world, but this does not mean that the impenitent, the unbelieving reprobate should be saved, but rather that ‘the great Benefits of Christs death, which I affirm to be generall, are given upon condition, not absolutely’.⁵⁵¹ Hammond went on to ‘desire the intelligent Reader to observe’ the conclusion to be drawn from St. Paul’s judgement ‘that if one died for all, then were all dead’.⁵⁵² Here the ‘all’ for whom Christ died must be as inclusive as the ‘all’ who were dead, and it is not just the elect who were

⁵⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p.27

⁵⁴⁸ Anon., *Testimony*, Title page

⁵⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p.4

⁵⁵⁰ Hammond, *Practicall Catechisme*, p.7 cited in Anon. *Testimony*, p.9

⁵⁵¹ Hammond, *Some Exceptions*, p.3

⁵⁵² 2 Corinthians, 5: 14b

‘dead’.⁵⁵³ Citing the ancient writers Irenaeus, Clements, Origen, Macarius, Cyrill of Jerusalem, Eusebius, Athanasius, and many others in support, in addition to which he could ‘adde from many [of] the learnedst Protestants, which never were thought to be tainted with any antient or modern heresie,’ he concluded the subject by confessing

to have learn'd it from the Church of England (of which I doe yet with joy professe my self an obedient son and member) in those words of her Catechisme, ... where I was taught, to beleive [*sic*] in God the Father, who created me and all the world, In God the Son, who redeemed me and all mankinde, and in God the holy Ghost, who sanctified me and all the elect people of God.⁵⁵⁴

The Church of England’s teaching here is that the delineation, ‘all mankinde’ — that is, those who have been redeemed — is evidently greater than ‘all the elect’ who have been sanctified. The words of the Catechism mean precisely what they say: Christ redeemed not only Hammond, not only the elect, but all mankind. Hammond remained persistent and consistent in maintaining that his theology was in accord with the early Church, the English Reformers, the established formularies of the Church of England and, above all, with Scripture.

The London ministers further objected to Hammond’s alleged denial of the doctrine of justification by faith alone. Under ‘Errours against the true Nature and ground of Faith; and Justification’, they complain that Hammond taught

that, Neither Paul nor James exclude or separate faithful actions [good works], or acts of Faith, from Faith, or the condition of Justification, but absolutely requiring them as the only things by which a man is justified.⁵⁵⁵

There appears to be some justification in this complaint. In Hammond’s catechism, in answer to the question, ‘what then is the condition ... without which there is yet no salvation to be had?’, the answer given is, ‘the condition required of us, is a constellation or conjuncture of all those Gospell-graces, faith hope, charity, selfe-deniall, repentance, and the rest, every one of them truly and sincerely rooted in the Christian heart, though mixed with much weakenesse and imperfection.’ And again, ‘Christs active obedience will not supply the place of ours, or make ours lesse necessary, and consequently that our renewed obedience and sanctification is still most indispensably required ... to make us capable of pardon of sinne or salvation’.⁵⁵⁶ In his defence, Hammond said that he failed to understand ‘wherein the error or perniciousnesse is conceived to lie,’ given St. James’s assertion that

⁵⁵³ Hammond, *Some Exceptions*, p.6

⁵⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p.7

⁵⁵⁵ Anon., *Testimony*, pp.14-15

⁵⁵⁶ Hammond, *Practicall Catechisme*, pp.12-13, and 37

man is justified by good works, not by faith alone, and that faith without such works is ineffective, it is dead.⁵⁵⁷ Hammond had argued that 'Faith ... is no proper efficient cause of justification' anyway. Our sins are no longer imputed to us, a state which is grounded solely on the 'satisfaction of Christ'. Faith is but the condition, not the cause of our justification.⁵⁵⁸

So convinced was Hammond of the rightness of his response to the London ministers that he concluded his rejoinder by inviting the principal subscribers, whom he names as 'John Downam, ... Dr. Gouge and Mr. Gataker, ... or some other person of learning and Christian temper ... to debate the truth of our pretensions; And for this I shall wait their leisure'.⁵⁵⁹ I have been unable to find any record that this challenge was ever accepted by the ministers.

It is rare to find theological controversialists in the seventeenth century engaging in dialectic discussion of their differences. Hammond did enter into a written debate on the same subject with the arch-Presbyterian Dr. Francis Cheynell (1608-1665) who — whilst in the Oxford of 1646, then under the control of Parliament — expressed opposition to Hammond's views on justification. Cheynell was classified by Baxter as among the 'over-Orthodox doctors' at the Westminster Assembly who persisted in introducing their 'New Fundamentals'.⁵⁶⁰ Cheynell wrote to Hammond:

Sir, that which I tooke exception at, was your confounding of faith and workes in a discourse of justification. That you doe frequently imply, that wee are justified by faithfull actions, acts of sincerity and obedience, that they are the Condition of justification, and that God doth absolutely require them as the onely things by which a man is justified, you say, the condition which makes us capable of pardon of sinnes, is positively the new creature, or renewed, &c. obedience to the whole Gospel, ... You say, that faith without the addition of such workes, such obedience Evangelicall would bee unsufficient to justification.⁵⁶¹

Hammond in response repeated his assertion that we are not justified by faith, which is no more than a condition, an assertion with which Baxter agreed.⁵⁶² Justification is a process of divine acceptance in which the sole cause is the satisfaction and merits of Christ by which God pronounces us just, accepted and forgiven. It is 'a worke of God without us, upon us, concerning us, ... [in which] nothing within us can have any reall proper efficiency'. This work of God effects within the believer the graces of conversion, repentance and regeneration which together involve a complete change of life, subduing passions,

⁵⁵⁷ Hammond, *Some Exceptions*, pp.6-8, citing James 2:17, 20 and 24

⁵⁵⁸ Hammond, *Practicall Catechisme*, p.59

⁵⁵⁹ Hammond, *Some Exceptions*, p.10

⁵⁶⁰ Baxter, *Reliquiae*, p.199

⁵⁶¹ Letter of Francis Cheynell to Hammond, early October, 1646 in Hammond, *Some Papers*, p.22

⁵⁶² Baxter, *Life of Faith*, pp.339-340

mortifying lusts, and overcoming the world. But none of these works, nor the faith that gave them birth are the cause of our justification. That is rooted in God, who alone pronounces a man just.⁵⁶³

In answer to the question ‘What is Repentance?’, Hammond’s answer, in his catechism, was ‘a change of minde, or a conversion from sinne to God. Not some one act of change, but a lasting durable state of new life, which I told you was called also Regeneration’.⁵⁶⁴ Repentance could never be a momentary sorrow for sin, but a permanent and continuous change in the way of life. Hammond was not anticipating perfection. Rather, repentance and faith he saw as a ‘constellation or conjuncture of all those Gospell-graces, faith hope, charity, selfe-deniall, repentance, and the rest, every one of them truly and sincerely rooted in the Christian heart, though mixed with much weakenesse and imperfection’.⁵⁶⁵

On Scripture, Hammond maintained the fullest use of the Bible as his authority in matters of doctrine and in his defence of the Church of England,⁵⁶⁶ although an overt declaration in support of the Reformed *sola scriptura* position is not so readily discernible. He asserted that wherever the Bible gives clear instruction on doctrine, it must be followed: ‘Where, in any matter of doctrine, the plaine word of God interposes it selfe, there we must most readily yeild, without demurs, or resistance’. But if doctrine is not defined in Scripture, ‘then the definitions of the Church wherein we live, must carry’. For that Church, when gathered in ‘lawfull assembly ... the tradition of the Universall, or opinion of the primitive Church, is to prevaile, [or] at least to be hearkened to with great reverence’. The Church may then legitimately oblige all ‘inferiours’ not to dissent, but obey, and where questions of biblical interpretation do arise, ‘then againe the judgment of the universall or my particular Church’ must prevail, this to

inhibit my venting my owne opinion either publiquely, or privately, with designe to gaine proselytes; [and where] liberty be absolutely left to all in that particular, then meekenesse requires me to enjoy my opinion, so as that I judge not any other contrary-minded.⁵⁶⁷

Hammond’s requirement that the faithful must submit to the lawful verdicts of the Church on matters of faith which are not specified in Scripture fails to give due weight to Article Six of the Thirty-eight Articles (1563) which declares

⁵⁶³ Letter of Hammond to Cheynell, dated October 19, 1646 in Hammond, *Some Papers*, pp.50-51

⁵⁶⁴ Hammond, *Practicall Catechisme*, p.82

⁵⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p.13

⁵⁶⁶ Packer, *Transformation*, p.88

⁵⁶⁷ Hammond, *Practicall Catechisme*, pp.130-131

that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.

John Packer argues that it was Hammond's popular catechism that 'was building up an edifice of doctrine that would contribute much to the re-establishment of the Church of England after 1660, whilst encouraging its loyal adherents during the years of trial'.⁵⁶⁸ Lettinga takes the argument further. He maintains that the *Practicall Catechisme* was published as a reaction to the Westminster Assembly and its confessions and catechisms. Hammond focused Christianity on personal practice, a matter of personal piety and morality which contrasted sharply with the Puritan stress on God's grace to such effect that it became, Lettinga argues, a reinvention of orthodox — presumably by that term he means 'Reformed' — theology which enabled Interregnum Anglicans to remain aloof from Puritanism.⁵⁶⁹ Lettinga maintains that whilst Hammond and the 'Caroline Anglican Moralists' did take on board the Puritan doctrine of the Covenant of Grace, they radically reinterpreted it. For them, all the baptised were enrolled in the Covenant, but 'salvation was given only to those who fulfilled its conditions — repentance, faith, and obedience'. Whilst they did not believe that obedience earned salvation, their contractual understanding of the Covenant caused them to focus their Christianity on morality and duty, a view which, Lettinga claims, 'dominated the Church of England from the Restoration to the Evangelical Revival of the eighteenth century'.⁵⁷⁰ Michael McGiffert concludes that historians, not to mention theologians

differ about Hammond's location in the theological spectrum of his era. ... These jostling appraisals and assignments constitute an exegetical embarrassment. Hammond was, and was not a kind of Calvinist; he was, and was not, an Arminian of sorts; his doctrine accorded, and did not accord, with Westminster's.⁵⁷¹

Turning to disputes on Church governance, it was in 1644 that Hammond first wrote in defence of episcopacy. By then pressure in Parliament for the eradication of episcopacy was at its height, a Bill for its abolition having passed both houses of Parliament in February 1642/3.⁵⁷² In *Considerations of Present Use* he argued against any change in the established hierarchy of bishops, presbyters and deacons, a structure established and accepted from Apostolic times. His principal object in the piece was to refute the argument, made in support of transformations, that the 'parting of the present

⁵⁶⁸ Packer, *Transformation*, p.51

⁵⁶⁹ Lettinga, *Covenant Theology*, p.654

⁵⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p.653

⁵⁷¹ McGiffert, 'Henry Hammond', pp.256-257

⁵⁷² Spalding and Brass, 'Reduction', p.420

Government' of the Church is *not* a change in religion. Hammond disagreed, and was insistent that the government of the Church is a 'considerable part of Religion', for by it the doctrine of the Church is preserved. He noted that by comparison with the 'vehemence' of the 'pleas' of the 'pretenders', whether they be Papal, Presbyterian or Independent, none of them are 'so calm or modest in their claims, as the Assertors of the English Prelacy'. Some might be tempted to think 'that the Eagerest pretenders shall be most heeded, and that meekness shall not inherit the earth,' but both David and Christ promised otherwise.⁵⁷³

Hammond further refuted the charge that to stand for the retention of episcopacy was to prefer the interests of the few to the detriment of the 'common wish of all'.⁵⁷⁴ The responsibilities of office are heavy, and consequently those called to it are entitled to its benefits in honours and revenue, yet they must needs be worthy of such encouragements and rewards. If they are not, then the answer is not the abolition of episcopacy, but 'a strict search into the manners and tempers, and sufficiencies of those that are to be admitted into holy Orders, and to be licentiate for publick Preachers'.⁵⁷⁵ The quality of those appointed to the priesthood will be reflected in the episcopate.

The office of priest or minister in the Church, in Hammond's understanding, is a calling from God, and no one can consider themselves lawfully ordained unless called and sent by God. The only way that such a calling can be lawfully verified is by a bishop who alone has the power of ordination, 'given to them ... by those who had it before, and can d[e]rive it from the Apostles, who had it immediately from Heaven'.⁵⁷⁶ Bishops, the successors of the Apostles in their privileges and prerogatives, God has appointed rulers over his household, and having succeeded to the apostolic 'power of the keyes', they 'after the manner of St. Peter, are vouchsafed the honor of being Bishops, hav[ing] the power of binding and loosing',⁵⁷⁷ an authority that includes the power of censure and excommunication, together with the receiving of humble penitents by absolution.⁵⁷⁸ Presbyters and deacons may do nothing without the consent of the bishop.⁵⁷⁹

It was his inflexible stance on the power and authority of the episcopate over the presbytery, nullifying the validity of Presbyterian and Independent ordination, which was, in Baxter's view, proving to be a major cause of dissension:

⁵⁷³ Hammond, *Considerations*, pp.2-3

⁵⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p.2

⁵⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.17-18

⁵⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.13-14

⁵⁷⁷ Hammond, *Keyes*, pp.33 and 35

⁵⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p.121

⁵⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p.36

There were at that time, two sorts of Episcopal Men, who differed from each other, ... The one was the old common moderate sort, who were commonly in Doctrine Calvinists, and took Episcopacy to be necessary *ad bene esse Ministerii & Ecclesiae*, but not *ad esse*; ... The other sort followed Dr. H. Hammond, ... they held that Ordination without Bishops was invalid, and a Ministry so ordained was null, and the Reformed Churches that had no Bishops, nor Presbyters ordained by Bishops, were no true Churches, though the Church of Rome be a true Church, as having Bishops: These Men in Doctrine were such as are called Arminians: ... Now in my Christian Concord, I had confessed that it was only the moderate ancient Episcopal Party which I hoped for Agreement with; it being impossible for the Presbyterian and Independant Party to associate with them that take them and their Churches, and all the reformed Ministers and Churches that have not Episcopal Ordination, for null: And knowing that this Opinion greatly tended to the Division of the Christian Churches, ... I spake freely against it, which alienated that party from me.⁵⁸⁰

In spite of this, Baxter considered Hammond a godly and tolerant man, and there are historians that agree with him,⁵⁸¹ though John Packer concludes that his toleration 'is of doubtful validity'. He argues that Hammond, given his inflexible stand for episcopacy, should be considered 'irenic rather than tolerant'⁵⁸². Nevertheless, it was Hammond's godliness, his deep learning and his 'love of moderation that was missed after the Restoration and which might well have turned the balances in favour of toleration'.⁵⁸³

Hammond was no less insistent in his defence of Church of England liturgy, in his mind so savagely usurped by the prescriptive introduction of the *Directory for ... Publique Worship*. His views on this service book, and his defence of the *Book of Common Prayer*, were first published in 1645 in *A View of the New Directorie*. Hammond argued that the eradication of episcopacy and the Church's liturgy was a low and servile act which the people of 'this Kingdom' could not have imagined they must bear. Add to that, the invasion of the Church's revenues was sacrilege, a calamity and sin unparalleled, with the abolition of the liturgy a venial sin and the cause of misery.⁵⁸⁴ Hammond defended the Church's Prayer Book by noting that the *Directory* lists reasons for its abolition as the 'manifold inconveniences' of the *Book of Common Prayer*, the Covenant requirement to reform religion in accordance with the Word of God, and the need to conform to the best Reformed Churches. Hammond insisted that the Prayer Book has no inconveniences, whereas the *Directory* has. 'There is nothing in the *Book of Common Prayer* '1. Contrary to design of Reformation, 2. Contrary to the Word of God, or 3. Contrary to the example of the best Reformed Churches. ... all other Reformed Churches ordinarily known by that Title, have

⁵⁸⁰ Baxter, *Reliquiae*, p.149. For more of Baxter's differentiation between the 'old' and 'new' Episcopal Divines, see Baxter, *Five Disputations*, pp.7-8

⁵⁸¹ e.g. Hutton, *A History*, p.153

⁵⁸² Packer, *Transformation*, p.198

⁵⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸⁴ Hammond, *New Directorie*, p.5

some kind of Liturgy', whereas the *Directory* has none.⁵⁸⁵ Hammond argued that Scripture is full of examples of the use of set prayers including the prophets, the apostles and Christ himself. It has been the practice of the Universal Church since the time of the apostles, and it is the practice of the Reformed Churches of other nations, including examples from Calvin as well as of the English Reformers, such as Cranmer.⁵⁸⁶ Hammond enlisted the support of the Puritan's great mentor:

We shall offer you no other proof or testimony, then what Mr. Calvin, ... hath given us ... As for Forme of Prayers, and Ecclesiasticall Rites, I very much approve, that it be set or certain. From which it may not be lawfull for the Pastors in their Function to depart, that so there may be provision made for the simplicity and unskillfullnesse of some, and that the consent of all the Churches among themselves may more certainly appear: and lastly also, that the extravagant levity of some, who affect novelties, may be prevented.⁵⁸⁷

As to the use of music in worship, Hammond maintained that the absence of hymns is directly opposed to the apostolic command to sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. The *Te Deum* is just such a hymn, sung since the time of Augustine, which is said to have been composed for Augustine's baptism by Ambrose.⁵⁸⁸

Turning to the *Directory for ... Publique Worship's* objection to the Church's use of bodily worship, the acts of kneeling and bowing, Hammond maintained that these are an act of obedience to the requirement to glorify God in our bodies, as well as souls. By so doing, we are following Christ's example who kneeled, and even prostrated himself in Prayer, also of many holy men in Scripture, who are affirmed to have done so. Did the objectors not kneel at home in their family prayers, or in their private closet prayers, and by so doing were they not approving that gesture? So, Hammond asked, can he from 'thence inferre, that by them [the objectors] the House of God, is the only place thought fit to be despised'. Hammond further objected to the abandonment of uniformity in Church services. 'The *Directory* ... [leaves] all to the chance of mens wils', he complained, and this is in direct contravention of Paul's call in 1. Corinthians 14: 40 to 'Let all things be done decently and in order. Of which I conceive the clear importance to be, that all be done in the Church according to custome and appointment'.⁵⁸⁹

It is in his adherence to his perception of 'Anglican' views on orthodox doctrine that Hammond revealed his prime concern. The *Directory* claims that by it, 'Ministers may be directed to keep like soundnesse of Doctrine', but in fact it makes no provision for the

⁵⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.6-7

⁵⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.13-16

⁵⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p.67

⁵⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.29-30

⁵⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.20-22

control of approved doctrine at all. It 'hath neither Creed nor Catechisme, nor one Article of Religion, or Doctrine asserted in it, but leaves that wholly to the Preacher', whose teachings may not be sound at all.⁵⁹⁰ Compare this with the uniformity of worship that is provided by the liturgy of the Prayer Book, 'by prescribing the manner of it' it succeeds whilst the *Directory* fails when it leaves 'all to the chance of men's wils'.⁵⁹¹

Like Taylor, Hammond was a man of exemplary spiritual standing, a divine who was certain of the biblical authority behind his standpoint. It was Hammond's prelatical scheme that required full acceptance of a written and authorised doctrinal formula and, with it, submission to a nationally imposed liturgical and ceremonial practice that left no room for freedom of conscience or variance of interpretation even on non-essentials. Men's wills cannot be trusted in the local situation. Discipline cannot be exercised at the parish level if freedom of conscience be granted. All must be in submission and conform to a central control ultimately vested in a single governor. Men of conscience, who considered themselves in submission to their understanding of the revelation of the will of God vested in the Scriptures, found themselves excluded by such an arrangement unless they were prepared to surrender their integrity. 'New Fundamentals' had become the problem for Hammond; 'New Prelacy' for Baxter and the Nonconformists. The rigidity of the convictions on both sides overcame any incentives they felt for unity, regardless of their expressed desires for peace, and their concern for the wellbeing of their congregations. Conscience was being asked to submit to an inflexible requirement to adhere to dogma.

Let us turn now to examine, by comparison, the nature and strength of the Nonconformist stance.

⁵⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.67-68

⁵⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p.22

Chapter 5

Seventeenth-Century Puritanism

Though honestie be no Puritan, yet it will doe no hurt, it will weare the Surplis of humilitie over the blacke-Gowne of a bigge heart.

William Shakespeare, *All's Well that Ends Well*, I, iii. 91 (1616)

In contrast to Conformist polemic, we turn now to examine the Puritan stance in the seventeenth century which, in the first decades, remained essentially unchanged from the sixteenth century. Still arguing largely from within the national Church, their goal remained a fully reformed Church in its governance, ceremonies, and discipline, Reformed in its doctrine, all presented in varying degrees of moderation and radicalism. The Church's episcopal structure and its liturgy continued to receive varying degrees of criticism, with one nonconforming curate, by 1639, insisting that the Prayer Book 'hath been the meanes of sending many souls to hell. [And] that the booke of Common prayer doth stinke in the nostrails of god'.⁵⁹² But, the Puritan agenda was not wholly negative: the call to repentance and faith for the unconverted, aligned with the demand for evidence of individual godliness in the believer, was emphasized in services centred upon lengthy sermons that sought to convince and edify, whilst being polemical in their stand against false doctrine. There were exceptions, but early Puritanism was able to maintain a doctrinal unity centred upon Calvinist dogma. This accord was not matched by like agreement on the methods to be employed in achieving their aims, and this was a dissention that was to manifest itself to devastating effect when they enjoyed the power to implement their schemes. As the century progressed Puritan engagement in controversy centred not only upon themes of ecclesiastical structure, but increasingly on disputes over the Church's commitment to Reformed theology, on internecine Puritan divisions, and on controversies with those advocating suspected heretical beliefs.

As Puritanism failed to retain its doctrinal solidarity, new pressures were to manifest themselves among the godly which served to heighten the tension. We have already touched upon the alleged Arminian views of Laud, but acceptance of anti-Calvinist, even Arminian, teaching was not confined to Laud and his Conformist supporters. An example of how the emerging emphasis was influencing Puritan thought are the opinions of the Nonconformist Ezekiel Culverwell (1554-1631) who, responding to accusations that he

⁵⁹² BL, Add Ms 36913, fo 137, cited in Maltby, *Prayer Book*, p.73

was an Arminian, and objections to his assertion that the gospel was on universal offer, maintained, 'I professe I cannot find one clear place [in Scripture] where the World must of necessity be taken for the Elect only'.⁵⁹³ Culverwell had come to the attention of Laurence Chaderton and Ussher for his view that the benefits of Christ's redemption were available to all. Culverwell was not alone. Como has published an article in which he seeks to 'analyse the broader process whereby puritans began to question and dispute the once-uncontested nostrums of reformed predestinarian orthodoxy ... a process that was well under way by 1646'. Whilst arguing for the 'Calvinist consensus' thesis, he claims that this consensus was 'neither simplistic nor monolithic'.⁵⁹⁴ Como proceeds to demonstrate that deviant views were infiltrating the consensus, involving Ussher himself and two of the English delegates to the Synod of Dort, Samuel Ward (1572-1643) and John Davenant (*happ.* 1572-1641). 'What should have been the ultimate moment of Calvinist triumph', argues Como, 'paradoxically served to reveal, and indeed to widen, the hidden fissures that divided Calvinists themselves'.⁵⁹⁵ It was in such instances when in the face of challenges to their orthodoxy Calvinist divines rallied to its defence, that the potential for disagreement and fragmentation became apparent among the Reformed themselves. As Calvinist polemicists engaged with ambiguities and tensions within their doctrinal stance, the slightest departure from the 'rigid unyielding quality of Bezan, supralapsarian orthodoxy'⁵⁹⁶ resulted in violent reactions, and accusations of rank Arminianism.⁵⁹⁷ Unyielding adherence to what was perceived to be 'orthodox' dogma was the divisive force that was driving apart the faithful. The more extreme the insistence on doctrinal conformity, the greater was the potential for divisive reaction. The prime example was Arminius himself, who, Como argues,

had been driven into [purported] error in part because Calvinist divines had lapsed into 'extreme absurdity' on the question of the extent of the atonement, and the subsequent intransigence and extremism of the Bezans ensured that the Arminians would only grow more persistent in their errors.⁵⁹⁸

So, whilst we might have imagined that there would have been few Arminians even amongst the most moderate of the Puritan clergy, Como has been able to identify a move among Puritans that, as the Civil Wars approached, had influenced them to such effect that

⁵⁹³ Culverwell, *Briefe Answer*, [p.9], and Como, 'Puritans', pp.67-71

⁵⁹⁴ Como, 'Puritans', pp.64-66

⁵⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.72

⁵⁹⁶ Supralapsarianism: see, Select Glossary. This is a term which does 'not appear to have come into use before the Synod of Dort (1618-19)', Bangs, *Arminius*, p.67

⁵⁹⁷ Como, 'Puritans', p.70

⁵⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.71

some of them were ‘giving up the strictures of rigorous Calvinism’.⁵⁹⁹ This we might have anticipated from the General Baptists, but among Como’s ‘apostates’ we find such stalwarts as John Goodwin, the Puritan clergyman who subsequently became an Arminian Independent, and Baxter. Baxter called into question the Reformation precept of *sola fide*, and is said to have become a four-point Calvinist, a form of Amyraldism,⁶⁰⁰ which accepts a hypothetical universalism; Christ’s death atones for all alike, but since none would believe on their own, God has elected those whom he will bring to faith in Christ.⁶⁰¹ This is an assertion we shall be examining in some depth in the next section, devoted to this renowned Puritan.

Returning to Goodwin, he is a clear representative of those who were entertaining concerns regarding the strictures of Calvinist doctrine among the Puritans in the mid-seventeenth century. He is the subject of a study by Coffey, who refutes the common assumption that he was a unique character, isolated in his forthright Arminianism. ‘He was emphatically not “a man by himself”, but an important player in a variety of networks and alliances’.⁶⁰² Goodwin is portrayed as a thorough-going godly Puritan, nurtured in the seed-bed of Puritanism at Queens’ College, Cambridge, for many years the vicar of St. Stephen’s Coleman Street in London, then a hotbed of Puritan activity, and one of the capital’s most influential pulpits.⁶⁰³ A stalwart for the divine authority of Scripture, Goodwin, in the mid-1640s, became increasingly unable to equate his predestinarian dogmas with biblical texts indicating God’s love for all mankind, Christ’s death for the entire world, and the free offer of salvation for all. He was troubled by God’s call to sinners to repent when his predestinarian dogma asserted they were incapable of doing so.⁶⁰⁴ Over a period of years he developed his views on Independency, toleration, republicanism and Arminianism, delighting many ‘Anglicans’ with his theology but not his ecclesiology, whilst pleasing the Independents with his Congregational views if not his doctrines of grace. The Presbytery were bitterly opposed to him on both counts. In May 1645, the Committee for Plundered Ministers ejected Goodwin from his living because of his radical views and his opposition to the Presbyterian drive for uniformity. When the Independents attained political power he was, in 1649, given back the church at St. Stephen’s as a meeting place for his now large

⁵⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.86-87

⁶⁰⁰ See, Select Glossary

⁶⁰¹ See Packer on Baxter, above, pp.99-100

⁶⁰² Coffey, *Goodwin*, p.4

⁶⁰³ *Ibid.*, p.2

⁶⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p.207

gathered church.⁶⁰⁵ His major works, *A Treatise of Justification* (1642) in which he refuted the notion that Christ's righteousness is imputed to the believer, *Divine Authority of Scriptures* (1647), and his overtly Arminian book, *Apologetica*, (1651), show him to be a scholarly biblical exegete well versed in the writings of sixteenth and seventeenth-century Reformed commentators, the latter publication resulting in no fewer than ten critical responses. Goodwin found support in the person of Tobias Conyers, a member of his congregation – later to become minister at St. Ethelberts,⁶⁰⁶ — who completed a translation of Arminius's work, *The Just Mans Defence*, in 1655, publishing it in 1657. Among Goodwin's most celebrated critics were Owen, a fellow Independent, in *Saints Perseverance* (1654), and Thomas Edwards (1599-1648), the high Presbyterian who pilloried him unmercifully for over a hundred pages in his infamous *Gangraena* (1646).⁶⁰⁷ It was in like fashion that Arminianism was arousing strong reactions from among the conservative Puritans, not only against the Laudians, but now against some from among the godly, exacerbating divisions within their own ranks.

In our research into the Puritan ethos prevalent in the seventeenth century, we have already referred to a major contribution to the subject from the Anglican theologian, J.I. Packer.⁶⁰⁸ *Quest* is a book in which Packer's declared intention is to give an overview of Puritan life and thought and then to contrast them with modern Western Christianity. His conclusion, the result of forty years in pursuit of his subject, is that the Puritans can teach us, in these 'Laodicean days', lessons that we badly need to learn, and that, by comparison with the Puritan 'wise giants', we are but 'zany pigmies'.⁶⁰⁹ The book's relevance to this study is that it enables us to compare a theologian's insight into Puritan belief and practice and those of historians, a contrast that we have already made observation.⁶¹⁰ Here we need to make comment upon Packer's approach to the nature of seventeenth-century Puritanism.

Packer claims, in *Quest*, to combine theology with biography and history, but in this last intent, as seen from a historian's perspective, there are weaknesses. Unfortunately he is either ignorant of, or has chosen to ignore, the considerable contributions of major historians to his subject. In this book — another that would have benefited from a bibliography — his acknowledgement of recent historical research is confined to works

⁶⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.98, and 122-123

⁶⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.266-267

⁶⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.1-2 and 31, and Edwards, *Gangraena*, pp.30-140

⁶⁰⁸ Above, p.99

⁶⁰⁹ Packer, *Quest*, pp.12, 29, 122, and 336. An unfortunate racist allusion here, no doubt entirely unintended.

⁶¹⁰ Above, p.100

such as those by Knappen, Haller, A.S.P. Woodhouse, and Perry Miller,⁶¹¹ citing books written, for the most part, in the late 1930s. For an author of a book on the Puritans published in 1990, written from whatever perspective, to pass over the enormous weight of Puritan scholarship since the Second World War, the work of historians such as Collinson, Tyacke, Russell, Lake, White, Fincham, Morrill, and Spurr, is a worrying omission.⁶¹² He considers that the theological question of the relationship between ‘Anglicans’ and Puritans is in a ‘comparatively undeveloped state of studies’, when the conclusions of a vast amount of research is available on that very subject.⁶¹³ What does this tell us about Packer’s view of historians?

Also of note is Packer’s heavy dependence on the works of a number of Puritan luminaries, in particular Baxter, Owen, Thomas Goodwin (1600-1680), and Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), examples drawn from the nonconforming or Independent elements within Puritanism. Is it reasonable to assume that these outstanding personalities are representative of the movement as a whole? And, what are we to make of his analysis of the state of the Church of England in the Elizabethan period that considers it to be ‘in a bad way’?⁶¹⁴ Packer highlights the attempts by an emerging Puritanism, principally from Cambridge, to rectify the ignorance and spiritual darkness, but this observation is made in an analysis which makes no mention of the significance of the contribution — or resistance — from Whitgift and Andrewes, and only two brief references to the major theological involvement of Hooker. We should also recall that the Church which he censures was steeped in the Calvinist dogma upon which he places such reliance and that the Puritans of this period, in spite of the Church’s alleged imperfections, did not consider it necessary to secede.

Regardless of these limitations, which are probably more evident to a historian than to Packer’s colleagues within the theological colleges, his research provides us with valuable insights into the mind of the Puritan, especially when he arrives, from a theological perspective, at conclusions which differ from, or provide new slants upon, those of historians. For example, his book gives considerable support to the view that Puritans were not dominated by the doctrines of predestination, election and reprobation. Calvinists many of them were, and their theology had a positive Reformed foundation which Packer is at pains to highlight, yet he identifies other imperative Christian issues for them,

⁶¹¹ Packer, *Quest*, p.28

⁶¹² Packer does make passing reference to G.F. Nuttall (1946 and 1967), G.M. Trevelyan (1947), H.C. Porter (1958), J.F.H. New (1964), and Christopher Hill (1966).

⁶¹³ Packer, *Quest*, p.37, n10

⁶¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.51

questions about the nature of God, Scripture, man and his sinfulness, the office and work of Christ, repentance, faith and conversion, the covenant of grace — albeit from a Calvinist perspective — holiness of life, hypocrisy, family life, social action, nominal Christianity, and so forth. Calvinism, election, and the Puritan stance against Arminianism are covered in Packer's book, but references to these topics are well exceeded by subjects of significance to the Puritan mind such as 'conscience', 'conversion', 'faith', 'the love of God', 'the gospel', 'grace', 'the Holy Spirit', 'prayer', 'preaching', 'salvation', and 'worship'. These are subjects that we do not find so regularly in the analyses offered by historians.

Packer writes from the perspective of a conservative Anglican — he might prefer the term 'Reformed Evangelical' — and, in dramatic contrast to Morrill, he is a great admirer of the Puritans and speaks of them in glowing terms, which he acknowledges to be an 'advocacy, barefaced and unashamed'.⁶¹⁵ That at times they could be dogmatic, arrogant and intolerant of those who did not subscribe to their point of view is not altogether apparent from his book. What of their disunity and the persecution they inflicted on others, including other Puritans, when they were in the ascendant? Stephen Marshall, the clergyman turned popular Presbyterian preacher in the 1640s, despaired of their dissention. In a sermon preached to Parliament on December 30, 1646, he complained:

Our Times are times of Divisions; such Divisions, as (I thinke) were hardly ever knowne in the Christian World; Divisions every where, ... but woe and alas, most of all, and worst of all, divisions among Gods people, the Servants of God ... the Land is darkened and infatuated, by the miserable divisions of Gods owne people.⁶¹⁶

Packer argues that Puritans saw themselves as 'God's servants, under orders to do all the good they could as they went along',⁶¹⁷ but what of Puritan iconoclasm and their violent destruction of cathedral worship, and should we not expect some meaningful admission of their involvement in regicide, civil war, their unpopularity, and the repeated breakdown of authority during their twenty years in power? It is Packer's view that none of the Puritans 'wanted to be revolutionaries in church or state. Though some of them reluctantly became such'.⁶¹⁸ The veracity of this unlikely claim is difficult to establish or deny but, as we shall see, Owen for one favoured the saints' engagement in what he perceived as their just wars against godlessness, and he preached in support of the execution of Charles I.⁶¹⁹ Certainly Hill does argue, relying on the testimony of the Russian ambassador in 1645, that stained

⁶¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.29

⁶¹⁶ Marshall, *Right Understanding*, pp.36-37

⁶¹⁷ Packer, *Baxter*, p.3

⁶¹⁸ Packer, *Quest*, p.25

⁶¹⁹ Below, p.176

glass windows and the pealing of church bells in London were then much in evidence, fostering his view that twentieth-century historians are wrong to argue for widespread iconoclasm in the country.⁶²⁰ But the inhabitants of cathedral cities such as Canterbury, Worcester, Hereford, Chichester, Exeter, Wells and Winchester, amongst others, might have taken some convincing. The West window and the Triforium Gallery at Winchester Cathedral remain as constant reminders of the consequences of unleashed religious bigotry and, by contrast, the patient and loving response of the local populace to such despoliation. It was the 'godly' army zealots, the Puritan ministers and parliamentary Commissioners, whose actions were endorsed by a parliamentary Ordinance, dated August 26, 1643⁶²¹ who, from the later months of 1642, in the pursuit of their Puritan ideology, perpetrated this desecration.⁶²²

Packer rightly highlights the suffering for conscience sake of those ejected, or who withdrew from the Church, following the Act of Uniformity of 1662,⁶²³ but what of the distress, many for conscience sake, suffered by the greater number of clergy, also harassed and ejected from their livings between 1640 and 1660, removed for a variety of reasons, including their persistence in the use of the *Book of Common Prayer* rather than use the Puritan *Directory for ... Publique Worship*, a service book compulsorily imposed on a reluctant Church by the Westminster Assembly and a Puritan Parliament?

Morrill and Packer represent the extremes of opinion about Puritan worth and effectiveness; it appears highly unlikely that either has taken any account of the other's work. Morrill considers the preaching of the Puritans to be austere and counter-productive, largely because of their severe predestinarian dogmatism,⁶²⁴ whilst Packer takes the view that the Puritan preachers were both powerful and popular for the very reason that they remained faithful to their Calvinist principles.⁶²⁵ It seems evident that we are faced in these two authors with written expressions of their own differing faith persuasions, and we are bound to wonder whether their conclusions have been influenced by religious perceptions.

However, when it comes to an analysis of the sermons and writings of the Puritans, Packer's role is exemplary. His comprehension of the motivating spirituality which drove the Puritan mind results from years of study. Historians, especially those hesitant to make an in depth exploration of the labyrinthine Puritan discourse, would benefit from the

⁶²⁰ Hill, 'Religion and Democracy', p.167

⁶²¹ Ordinance for demolishing superstitious images, etc., and removing Communion Tables from the East End of Churches, before November 1, 1643.

⁶²² Lehmberg, *Cathedrals*, pp.25-39

⁶²³ Packer, *Quest*, pp.119-122

⁶²⁴ Morrill, 'Impact', pp.64-65

⁶²⁵ Packer, *Quest*, pp.284-289

lessons to be learned from Packer's research, his methods, and his knowledge of his subject, particularly his enquiry into those discourses addressed directly to their church congregations. Time and again it is their pastoral concern, the Puritan emphasis on the obligation to care for the 'flock', which stands out. It was the aspiration to build up the Church, that is, the people of God, by exhortation and edification, revealed in devotional writings and pulpit utterances, rather than in their doctrinal polemic largely to be found in print and public engagement, which demonstrates the heart of the 'godly' pastor at its best. Indeed, I maintain, it was not the Puritan's faithfulness to Calvinist doctrine that made them either austere and counter-productive, or powerful and popular. It was not dogma, but devotion, their dedication to people, their pastoral concern for the spiritual wellbeing of those in the pew, allied with their commitment to the Christ they sought to serve, that was the enduring feature of their ministry. But then, such admirable qualities were not the sole prerogative of the Puritan.

With these thoughts in mind, it is time now to turn to the life and work of some individual Puritans, starting with no less a figure than Richard Baxter, the deprived divine commemorated annually in the Church of England's liturgical Calendar.⁶²⁶

a. Richard Baxter and conscience

That the Churches of Christ are dolefully tempted and distracted by Divisions, no man will deny that knoweth them: That the Clergie is not only greatly culpable herein, but the chief cause, cannot be hid. ... each party layeth it from themselves, on others, and hate all that accuse them, while they are the sharpest ... accusers of the rest.

Richard Baxter⁶²⁷

In this section, we shall turn to the polemical writings of Richard Baxter, a Puritan divine who did more than any other in his time to further the cause of unity amongst Christians, yet who engaged deeply in their disputes and divisions, a man who, I shall show, resisted reliance on dogma as a basis for concord between believers. Indeed, right to the end of life he maintained that it was doctrine that was the major cause of division.⁶²⁸

Baxter the iconic Kidderminster pastor and evangelist, parliamentary chaplain, ejected clergyman, Nonconformist activist, 'prophet of ecumenical comprehension' and advocate of 'the "middle way" between the extremes of the day',⁶²⁹ can perhaps justifiably be identified as the quintessential Puritan, certainly as defined in J.I. Packer's model. Packer,

⁶²⁶ June 14

⁶²⁷ Baxter, *Catholic Theologie*, Preface, unpaginated

⁶²⁸ See Appendix II, p.326

⁶²⁹ Clifford, *Atonement*, p.17

whilst not comfortable with all of Baxter's theology, yet sees him as an example of 'real Puritan piety', and 'all his writings display him as the classic mainstream Puritan that he ever sought to be'.⁶³⁰ Elsewhere, Packer describes him as 'a Puritan Christian whose God-centeredness, devotion, zeal, mastery of Scripture, and passion for holiness were truly awesome'.⁶³¹

As a writer, Baxter was prolific. As William Bates (1625-1699) remarked in his funeral sermon, 'his Books, for their number and variety of Matter in them, make a Library'.⁶³² Keeble lists 139,⁶³³ and Baxter himself confessed that in the abundance of his work he had overloaded the world, thereby 'putting [it] to so much trouble'.⁶³⁴ As a Nonconformist he was extolled by his friends and ostracised by his opponents, suffering in 1685, towards the end of his life, twenty-one months imprisonment for sedition, convicted by the infamous Judge George Jeffreys (1645-1689) following a travesty of a trial at which the judge threatened to have him flogged through the streets of London.⁶³⁵

As a controversialist Baxter maintained that he was a man of peace, yet he remained determined to argue in word and print for what he deemed to be essential truth against dissent, both before and after his ejection from the Church of England ministry. His driven regard for both harmony and doctrinal verities was to prove a lifelong tension in his ministry. 'I do so heartily Love Peace', he argued, 'that I have hard thoughts of Controversie: yet do I so Love the Truth, that I refuse not to contend for it'.⁶³⁶ In debate and negotiation he did not always benefit his Puritan cause, prone to dominate discussion, meticulous in his enunciation of nice distinctions, and showing little patience with those with whom he differed.⁶³⁷ Keeble suggests that his 'disputatious temper, asperity and argumentative tenacity were remarkable even for an age habituated to combative controversy',⁶³⁸ whilst Edward Cardwell, the nineteenth-century historian, maintained that 'no person ... could be so little qualified for the office of mediation as was Richard Baxter'.⁶³⁹ Nonetheless, in spite of this propensity for contention, as an advocate of Christian unity he was well ahead of his time, although he never wholly associated with any church party, maintaining that he was openly opposed to

⁶³⁰ Packer, *Baxter*, p.2

⁶³¹ Packer, 'Introduction', p.13

⁶³² Bates, *Funeral-sermon*, p.105

⁶³³ Keeble, *Man of Letters*, pp.156-168

⁶³⁴ Baxter, *Reliquiae*, Pt.I., p.106

⁶³⁵ Clifford, *Atonement*, p.22, and Lewis, 'Taylor and Baxter', p.72

⁶³⁶ Baxter, *Apology*, 'The Preface Apologetical', A2r

⁶³⁷ Ratcliffe, 'Savoy Conference', pp.108-109

⁶³⁸ Keeble, *Letters*, p.10

⁶³⁹ Cardwell, *Conferences*, p.265

all Sects [which] shew the Sin and Folly ... of all that would appropriate the Church to themselves ... Which of all these parties is the Church? ... the Catholic Church is that which contains all the parts, though some more pure and some less.⁶⁴⁰

When accused of being a mixture of Episcopal, Presbyterian and Independent, his answer was, ‘and what harm is that? I am for that which is good in all, and for the Faults of none: But these Men [his accusers] must needs be faultless, and curse all others, that they may bless themselves’.⁶⁴¹

After the Restoration Baxter declined a bishopric in the national Church⁶⁴² and, in spite of the fact that none of the conditions contained in the 1662 Act of Uniformity specifically excluded him from holding a benefice, he refused to conform, although he did avoid separating completely from the Church of England.⁶⁴³ Whilst finding fault with both diocesan prelacy and Presbyterian Church order, and rejecting Independency and Separatism as schismatic, he bewailed the Church’s divisions, and was actively prepared, as in the establishment of the Worcestershire Voluntary Association of Ministers, to engage in ecumenical fellowship and ministry with all three parties, indeed with any who were prepared to endorse the historic ecumenical Creeds. Always suspicious, at a time when reliance on confessions of faith was widespread, of the ‘ticklish business’ of defining essential dogma, he argued that the Ecumenical Creeds, the Lord’s Prayer and the Decalogue alone were a sufficient declaration of the ‘Fundamentals’ of religion. They contain ‘all that is necessary to Salvation, and hath been by all the Ancient Churches taken for the Sum of their Religion’.⁶⁴⁴ They alone provide the ‘terms sufficient for unity between churches’.⁶⁴⁵

In the civil war years Baxter’s loyalties appear ambivalent, for he declared himself to be ‘unfeignedly for King and Parliament: ... We took the true happiness of King and People, Church and State, to be our end’.⁶⁴⁶ In spite of this royal allegiance the Laudian form of episcopacy he rejected as divisive, and he was alienated by the *et caetera* oath.⁶⁴⁷ He also refused ‘to play fast and loose with [another] dreadful Oath’, namely the Presbyterian Parliament’s Solemn League and Covenant, persuading both the parish of Kidderminster and ‘most of Worcestershire besides’ not to subscribe. Whilst he opposed the ‘usurper’

⁶⁴⁰ Baxter, *Reliquiae*, Pt.I., p.112

⁶⁴¹ Baxter, *Penitent Confession*, p.69

⁶⁴² The See of Hereford

⁶⁴³ See below, p.159

⁶⁴⁴ Baxter, *Reliquiae*, Pt.II., pp.197-198

⁶⁴⁵ Baxter, *Cure*, p.381

⁶⁴⁶ Baxter, *Reliquiae*, Pt.I., p.50

⁶⁴⁷ See, Select Glossary

Cromwell, he acknowledged that under his rule he had enjoyed unhindered liberty to preach, a freedom which he was later denied under a king to whom he had sworn allegiance.⁶⁴⁸ In doctrine Baxter followed a path between strict Calvinism and Arminianism, sometimes referred to, even in his lifetime, as 'Baxterianism'. In his early years he was convinced that Arminianism was the 'enemy', but, 'having set [himself] impartially to study it', he concluded that those who 'rail and plot against one another' are of the same opinion, though unaware of it. Any remaining contentions were considered to be 'dubious' in nature, and should never be the cause of division.⁶⁴⁹

Baxter was born in Rowton, Shropshire, in 1615, the son of a somewhat impoverished gentleman freeholder. He had a mixed experience in his education, which included a period at the newly formed Wroxeter Free School where his fellow pupils included Richard Allestree (1621/2-1681).⁶⁵⁰ Much to his eventual regret Baxter followed the advice of his headmaster and did not attend university, in spite of which, as a result of his own painstaking self-instruction and extensive reading, he became one of the best informed divines of the seventeenth century. His religious faith was influenced by his father, his reading of the Bible, and the study of books by authors such as Perkins, Richard Sibbes (1577?-1635), Edmund Bunny (1540-1618), and Culverwell.

Having then no scruples about conformity, Baxter was ordained deacon by John Thornborough (1551?-1651), Bishop of Worcester, in December 1638, a benefit not often bestowed in the seventeenth century on those without university preparation. He later confessed that he had not even read the Book of Ordination to which he had subscribed, and it was only when confronted by Nonconformists in Dudley and the surrounding villages, where he first preached, that he was forced to a strict examination of his position.⁶⁵¹ He concluded that kneeling was lawful, but had doubts regarding the surplice and, though he would never have forsaken his ministry on that account, he never wore it. He had no scruples about the ring in marriage, but he considered the Cross in Baptism unlawful, and again never used it. He accepted the use of forms of prayer and a set liturgy, though he judged the existing use of it 'to have much disorder and defectiveness in it, but nothing which should make the use of it, in the ordinary Publick Worship, to be unlawful to them that have not Liberty to do better'.⁶⁵² Discipline he considered essential and was grieved to witness the 'sad Effects of its neglect'. He came to realise that subscription was

⁶⁴⁸ Baxter, *Reliquiae*, Pt.I., p.64, and p.87

⁶⁴⁹ Baxter, *Doctrinal Controversies*, pp.17-18

⁶⁵⁰ Baxter, *Reliquiae*, Pt.I., p.3

⁶⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp.13-14

⁶⁵² *Ibid.*, p.14

unlawful and he admitted: 'I sinned by [my] temerity in what I did'. Whilst he still used the Prayer Book he was unable to accept that there was nothing therein contrary to the Word of God.⁶⁵³ All these conclusions he kept to himself, refusing to dispute with Nonconformists, 'for I found their Censoriousness and Inclinations towards Separation, ... to be a Threatning Evil, and contrary to Christian Charity'.⁶⁵⁴

During the civil war years Baxter was appalled by the enthusiastic radicalism he encountered in the parliamentary armies. Whilst the 'abundance of the common Troopers, and many of the Officers, I found to be honest, sober, Orthodox Men, ... a few proud, self-conceited, hot-headed Sectaries had got into the highest places'.⁶⁵⁵ 'They were far from thinking of a moderate Episcopacy', he complained, 'or of any healing way between the Episcopal and the Presbyterians: They most honoured the Separatists, Anabaptists, and Antinomians'.⁶⁵⁶

Baxter briefly agreed, in 1645, to become chaplain to the regiment of his friend Edward Whalley (*d.*1674/5) in an attempt to recover the soldiery from their delusions, but he found them 'fierce with Pride and Self-conceitedness, and had gotten a very great conquest over their Charity, both to the Episcopal and Presbyterians'.⁶⁵⁷ In this office he found himself ostracised even by his friends for his openness to, and advocacy of, restraint and tolerance. His experiences during this period of 'Anabaptists', Antinomians, Seekers, Separatists, Diggers and Levellers, united only by their 'common interest' in 'liberty of conscience' shocked him.⁶⁵⁸ In *Unreasonableness of Infidelity* (1655) he records, 'sometimes they make a jest at Christ; sometimes at scripture; sometimes at the soul of man; ... challenging the devil to come and appear to them ... not believing that indeed he is'. Some give themselves up, he complained, to sensuality, saying 'that it is not they but sin that dwelleth in them; and therefore it is sin that shall be damned, and not they'.⁶⁵⁹ This exposure to such extremism had a marked effect on the development of his views on conditional justification, a reaction to the perceived dangers of Antinomianism with its exclusive emphasis on free grace. His response resulted in an abundant publication of books, often written as hasty reactions to a perceived pressing necessity. Baxter admitted that his wife thought that he would have

⁶⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p.50

⁶⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p.51

⁶⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p.53

⁶⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p.57

⁶⁵⁹ Baxter, *Unreasonableness of Infidelity*, 'The Preface', c3, reprinted in, Baxter, *Practical Works*, XX, p.xxii. Andrew Bradstock has a full analysis of radical religion in the period in *Radical Religion* (2011)

done better to have written fewer books and, had he done so, those books might have been better.⁶⁶⁰

Baxter first began work on *The Saints Everlasting Rest* (1650), but his first published book was *Aphorisms of Justification*, in 1649. In it he dealt specifically with the dangers contained within radical Antinomian thinking, and he joined issue with Owen's understanding of the atonement as defined in *Death of Death* (1649). Baxter's arguments were clearly contentious and fostered a furious response from both ends of the theological spectrum. Whilst expressing surprise at the degree of criticism the book aroused,⁶⁶¹ he came to acknowledge that his censure was defective and incautious. He reasoned that, though young, he had felt bound to do his best to 'save the World' from prevailing errors. 'I have now learned to contradict Errours, and not to meddle with the Persons that maintain them. But indeed I was then too raw to be a Writer'.⁶⁶²

It was his rejection of the excessive Antinomian stress on free grace and its claim that acts of holiness have no part in the process of redemption, with the resultant assertion that it makes no difference how we live as long as we are among the 'elect', which resulted in Baxter's insistence that justification was a process which involves human co-operation with divine grace; it was conditional upon good works: there could be no salvation without holiness. Faith, he argued, 'is not the only Condition of the New Covenant ... severall other duties also are part of that Condition',⁶⁶³ an argument which he endorsed when he claimed that faith alone, in opposition to 'works of the Gospel', cannot justify. Works also justify as a secondary condition of the Covenant.⁶⁶⁴ There can be no other way, he argued, of understanding the 'plain expressions' of the Epistle of James: 'it cannot be doubted, but that a man is justified by Works, and not by Faith only'.⁶⁶⁵ Justification by faith is qualified; 'sincere Obedience is without all doubt, a Condition of our Salvation: therefore also of our Justification'.⁶⁶⁶ Only those who both believe and who obey the Gospel can claim to have a part in Christ's satisfaction, to be in possession of legal and evangelical righteousness.⁶⁶⁷ Baxter denied that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us:

To affirm ... that our Evangelicall or new Covenant-Righteousness is in Christ and not in our selves, or performed by Christ and not by our selves, is such a monstrous piece of

⁶⁶⁰ Keeble, *Man of Letters*, p.10, citing Baxter, *Breviate of Margaret*, p.73

⁶⁶¹ Keeble, *Man of Letters*, p.15

⁶⁶² Baxter, *Reliquiae*, Pt.I., p.107

⁶⁶³ Baxter, *Aphorisms*, p.149

⁶⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p.185

⁶⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p.187

⁶⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p.199

⁶⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p.70

Antinomian doctrine, that no man who knows the nature and difference of the Covenant can possibly entertain, and which every Christian should abhor as unsufferable.⁶⁶⁸

In conclusion, Baxter insisted,

it is most clear in the Scripture, and beyond all dispute, that our Actuell, most proper, compleat Justification, at the great Judgement, will be according to our Works, and to what we have done in flesh, whether Good or Evill: which can be no otherwise then as it was the Condition of that Justification.⁶⁶⁹

These assertions, which appear to be a denial of the doctrines of *sola fide* and *sola gratia*, were bound to result in protest from Reformed friends and enemies alike. In the face of these onslaughts, Baxter consistently defended his stance in, amongst other books, his *Apology* (1654), *Confession of his faith* (1654/5), *Of Justification* (1658), *Appeal to the Light* (1674), and *Catholik Theologie* (1675). In defending his position in the 1670s, Baxter argued that, in his death, Christ was our mediator, not the full representative of our persons. ‘God did not so impute our sins to him, as to take the very sins themselves to be his own sins.’ That would render Christ an ignorant infidel, atheist, blasphemer, murderer, adulterer and liar, the greatest sinner in the world. ‘It was only the punishment which he underwent, as a voluntary sacrifice of propitiation’.⁶⁷⁰

Allison argues that Baxter’s hypothesis moved away from the ‘classical’ Anglican Reformed stance, maintaining a position ‘remarkably like’ Taylor, Thorndike and Hammond. In so doing,

Baxter takes the position that Christ himself fulfilled the conditions of the old covenant, and thereby purchased for us easier terms within the new covenant. On account of Christ’s righteousness, our own righteousness (faith and repentance) is accounted, or imputed, as acceptable righteousness. We are, in other words, justified by our own righteousness on account of the righteousness of Christ.⁶⁷¹

Confronted by his many critics Baxter acknowledged that *Aphorisms* was ‘defective, and hath some propositions that need correction’. He regretted having ‘medled too forwardly with Dr. Owen, and one or two more that had written some Passages’ which in his view were ‘too near to Antinomianism. For I was young, and a stranger to mens tempers’. His dispute with Owen persisted in print, though Baxter denied himself the ‘last word ... because’, he argued, ‘I had begun with him. And I perceived that the common distast [*sic*] of Men against him and his Book made my Reply the more unnecessary’.⁶⁷² Baxter’s

⁶⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p.72

⁶⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p.203

⁶⁷⁰ Baxter, *Appeal*, p.1

⁶⁷¹ Allison, *Moralism*, pp.156-157

⁶⁷² Baxter, *Reliquiae*, Pt.I., p.107, and p.111

differences with Owen persisted because, in spite of his assertions to the contrary, Baxter, having developed these amendments to strict Bezan Calvinism, remained consistent. As Allison argues, in *Aphorisms* Baxter ‘explicitly declares that it is not God’s will, “that any man should be justified ... who hath not some ground in himself of personall and particular right and claim thereto”’, and whilst he sought to defend and amend his position, his ‘views on justification were never substantially altered’.⁶⁷³

The divergence between Baxter and Owen has been studied by Tim Cooper, who notices that these godly men were relatively close in their outlooks in the early 1640s, but that Baxter moved away from the initial high Calvinist stance he then shared with Owen, whilst the latter moved on from his early Presbyterian convictions to embrace Independency. They became separated both doctrinally and ecclesologically, a division strengthened by Owen’s reliance on doctrinal confessions. Cooper acknowledges the force of these reasons for this separation, a divide they were unable to resolve throughout their lives, but claims that the ‘issues ... routinely explored by historians and theologians do not in themselves go far enough’.⁶⁷⁴ With good supporting evidence, he maintains that a strong influence on these men was their differing experiences of the first Civil War.⁶⁷⁵

The disunion between these two leading Puritans of the seventeenth century is multifaceted and Cooper’s thesis is not a typical analysis of disagreements to be found among the godly, yet the question remains: is it a valid assertion to maintain that, in spite of the evident divergence of views on Church governance, Puritans maintained unity in matters of doctrine? In my view the evidence to the contrary is abundant: it was differences on theological issues that repeatedly gave rise to division, even rejection. Called by Parliament to a conference of fourteen ministers, including Owen, Philip Nye (*bap.* 1595-1672), and Thomas Goodwin, Baxter found that they had already established fourteen or fifteen articles which he considered neither essential nor true. In the event, Baxter notes, ‘Parliament were glad with silence to pass by all their Works, and take no notice of it, lest it should be a publick Reproach that we could not agree on the Fundamentals’.⁶⁷⁶ These divines, who were not slow to acknowledge their shared faith in the Trinitarian God of the Scriptures, found themselves unable to agree on those doctrinal issues which they yet maintained were the foundation of their religion. The conflict between the diverse private or sectarian interpretations of what constitutes an orthodox biblical system of belief was

⁶⁷³ Allison, *Moralism*, p.156, citing Baxter, *Aphorisms*, p.60

⁶⁷⁴ Cooper, ‘Baxter and Owen’, p.500

⁶⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.511-516. Cooper’s thesis has subsequently been published in extended form in *John Owen, Richard Baxter and the Formation of Nonconformity* (Farnham, 2011)

⁶⁷⁶ Baxter, *Reliquiae*, Appendix IV., p.75

successfully dividing great men of faith, men who were nonetheless united in their shared relationship with the divine. Doctrine was taking precedence over their standing in Christ and the split here was not with their Conformist opponents, but a rift among those that held nonconforming Puritan convictions.

To Matthew Sylvester (1636/7-1708), the editor of Baxter's posthumous *Reliquiae*, the divisions among Christians, evident throughout Baxter's years of ministry, were of great concern. They resulted not only from 'unhappy Tempers, ... want of frequent, patient, and calm Conference and impartial Debates about things controverted, [and] addictedness to Self-Interest', but more seriously, 'representing the Doctrine of our Christianity in our own Artificial Terms and Schemes, and so confining the Interest, Grace, and Heart of God and Christ to our respective Parties'.⁶⁷⁷ Such concerns do not sit comfortably with any claim that the Puritans present us with doctrinal unity.⁶⁷⁸ Owen also wrote at length of the differences and divisions amongst professors of the Gospel, insisting that 'the Glory of God, the Honour of Christ, the Progress of the Gospel, with the Edification and peace of the Church, are deeply concerned in them, and highly prejudiced by them'.⁶⁷⁹ We have already noted Marshall's despair at the 'miserable divisions of Gods owne people',⁶⁸⁰ and this is a concern constantly endorsed by Baxter, who, writing in *Catholick Unity* (1660), grieved over

the uncharitableness and discords of this age, ... to hear professed Christians so censoriously condemning, and passionately reviling one another, while they are proudly justifying themselves.

Baxter mourned to see

Church set up against Church, and Pastors against Pastors, in the same Parishes; and each party labouring to disgrace the other and their way, that they may promote their own.⁶⁸¹

It was to the nation's shame that Christian men 'manage their differences so unpeaceably', so much so that the divisions had become a stumbling block to the ungodly, a cause for both grief and derision. All might declare that they were lovers of the way of peace, but 'as well as they love Unity and Peace, they love the Causes of discord and division much better'.⁶⁸²

⁶⁷⁷ Matthew Sylvester, Editor's preface to Baxter, *Reliquiae*, [pp.10-11]

⁶⁷⁸ e.g. J.I. Packer, see above, p.99

⁶⁷⁹ Owen, *Discourse*

⁶⁸⁰ Marshall, *Right Understanding*, pp.36-37 cited above at p.148

⁶⁸¹ Baxter, *Catholick Unity*, pp.2-3

⁶⁸² *Ibid.*, pp.4-5

Elsewhere, in *Only Way of Concord* (1680), Baxter argued that discord among Christ's ministers gave the lie — 'unsay too powerfully' — to their declaration of the power of grace and the excellency of Christianity.⁶⁸³ At the end of his life, Baxter made a list, in *End of Doctrinal Controversies* (1691), of the twenty-eight doctrinal disputes that, in his view, 'most troubled the Churches'.⁶⁸⁴ In the same publication, he argues: 'I am ashamed to hear of't in the Pulpits: one Party rendring the Doctrine of Predestination as odious Blasphemy, and another Party crying down Universal Redemption and Free-will and Arminianism, as an Enemy to God's Grace; and neither of them know what they speak against'.⁶⁸⁵ He despaired of these divisions in English Christendom: 'I am deeplier afflicted for the disagreements of Christians than I was when I was a younger Christian', he maintained. It was not the arguments about ceremonies and the like that troubled him, rather it was the tragic absence of Christian virtues amongst the disputants:

Poor people think that it is the want of Uniformity in certain Ceremonies of mans invention, that is the cause of our great divisions and distractions; When, alas, it is the want of unity in matters of greater consequence, even of Faith, and Love, and Holiness.⁶⁸⁶

The irony is that those divines we find so forward in their defence of their own understanding of essential orthodoxy, — including Owen and Taylor — also maintained in their writings, and at times in their actions, an insistent advocacy of religious toleration. In this respect, Baxter also was a leading advocate. Even after his ejection, so far as it was a matter of choice, Baxter would communicate with the assembly he thought the best and, as a matter of principle, he frequently attended the services of the parish church, stating as his reason that the Established Church retained the 'Advantage of Authority, Order and Confederacy, and the Protestant Interest is chiefly cast upon them, therefore I will not separate from Lay-Communion with them, though they need much Reformation'.⁶⁸⁷ In this determination to practice an inclusive communion Baxter also considered it lawful to hold communion with Independents and even Anabaptists, his motivation being not to separate with them any further than they were separated from Christ.⁶⁸⁸

Such incentives were the driving force for the establishment, in 1653, with Baxter as the guiding light, of the Worcester Association of Pastors and Churches, the precursor to the Voluntary Association movement, a fellowship whose terms were deliberately 'large

⁶⁸³ Baxter, *Only Way of Concord*, p.77

⁶⁸⁴ Baxter, *Doctrinal Controversies*, pp.21-22. Listed in Appendix II, p.326

⁶⁸⁵ Baxter, *Doctrinal Controversies*, p.21

⁶⁸⁶ Baxter, *Catholic Unity*, p.9

⁶⁸⁷ Baxter, *Reliquiae*, Appendix IV, p.72

⁶⁸⁸ Keeble, *Letters*, p.18

enough for all, Episcopal, Presbyterians and Independants'.⁶⁸⁹ *Christian Concord*, which was the agreement reached between the Worcestershire pastors, was published in the same year. The adherents resolved 'not to addict or engage ourselves to parties ... but at present only to Practice unanimously those known Truths which the sober and godly of each Party are agreed in'.⁶⁹⁰ Whilst their various confessions are acknowledged, they are recognised as being imperfect, and not to be required as a test of faith either for the individual or a Church. The essentials of the faith should not be subject to amendment to obviate every new heresy as it arises. Declarations of faith merely serve 'to satisfie men ... we make none of our Confessions the Rule of our Faith. Nor do we take any thing in them to be infallible and unalterable ... only the holy Scripture is the Rule of our Faith, and the Test of our Religion, and that all that is contained in our severall Confessions is not Essentiall to a Christian or a Church'.⁶⁹¹ This is a principle that Baxter applied equally to 'that Form of Words called the Articles of the Church of England' as to any other. They, like the rest, are subordinate to the Scriptures and the Creeds, and whilst they might be a 'laudable profession of that Church at the Reformation, ... far be it for us to be of a Religion and Church which is no older than the said Articles or Common Prayer'.⁶⁹²

For the furtherance of Christian concord among churches, wherever there were differences in their articles, Baxter maintained that resolution is achieved by reducing the record of essentials, to a reliance on Scriptural sufficiency — expressed in biblical phraseology — and the Ancient Creeds. 'Scripture-sufficiency must be maintained, and nothing beyond it imposed on others, ... it is the Bible that we must shew them, rather than any Confessions of Churches, or writings of men'.⁶⁹³ 'All mens Confessions and Comments [are] to be valued only as subservient helps, and not to be the test of Church-Communion, any further then they are exactly the same with Scripture'.⁶⁹⁴ Under such an arrangement, he saw no reason why Episcopalians, Presbyterians and Independents should not be able to unite without any change to their principles.⁶⁹⁵ In the event, Baxter was forced to acknowledge that,

though we made our Terms large enough for all, ... there was not one Presbyterian joyned with us that I know of, ... nor one Independant, nor one of the New Prelatical way (Dr. Hammonds) but three or four moderate Conformists that were for the old Episcopacy; and

⁶⁸⁹ Baxter, *Reliquiae*, Pt.I., p.97

⁶⁹⁰ Baxter, *Christian Concord*, A2r

⁶⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp.4-5

⁶⁹² Baxter, *Articles*, pp.1-2

⁶⁹³ Baxter, *Reformed Pastor*, p.135

⁶⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.294. See also Baxter, *Reliquiae*, Pt.3, p.54, and p.65

⁶⁹⁵ Baxter, *Reliquiae*, Pt.2, p.112

all the rest were meer Catholicks; Men of no Faction, nor siding with any Party, but owning that which was good in all.⁶⁹⁶

The new Episcopal Party in particular, he knew, would never participate, for they ‘deny the very being of all the Ministers and Churches that have not Diocesan Bishops, [and they] are not capable of Union with the rest upon such Terms’.⁶⁹⁷ But it was from amongst the disengaged Christians, the truly Catholic, the servants of Christ and not of men, and those that love their Brethren as Christians, and not their Party, that Baxter saw the great hope of the Association’s success.⁶⁹⁸ It is in Baxter’s abhorrence of controversy and division — despite his engagement in them — and in his love of concord and unity amongst Christian believers, that we find his major contribution to the subject of this thesis, exposing as he does the character and root cause of religious contention and division in the mid-seventeenth century.

In *Reformed Pastor* (1656) — addressed to the ministers of his Worcestershire fellowship — he tackled the essential nature of the godly pastor’s duties, especially in private instruction, catechizing and Church discipline. In the pursuance of these primary ideals the task of the Christian minister is seen as the strengthening of the common cause, the care and well being of the members of their flock, together with the evangelistic task of the enlargement of the Kingdom. In order to achieve this end, ‘fellow-labourers’ must maintain union and communion among themselves, and unity and peace in the churches they oversee. Tragically, too often it was the pastors who were the fomenters of division when instead it was they who should have spent day and night to ‘bend their studies to find means to close such breaches’. The pastor must learn to discern the difference between doctrinal certainties and uncertainties, between things necessary and unnecessary, to separate ‘Catholike verities’ from private opinions. They must understand the true nature of the controversies, reducing them to the essential point of difference and, crucially, not to make them seem greater than they were. Too often it was the ‘evil Spirit’ of division that prevailed, with pastors elevating ‘dividing Principles’ into ‘glorious Truths’. Even among those who were zealous for truth and holiness as revealed in Scripture, there were too many who were ‘reading those Scriptures ... as if they read them not; never observing or laying to Heart the strict Commands of the Lord therein, as if there had been no such Passages in our Bibles’.⁶⁹⁹

⁶⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.97

⁶⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.112

⁶⁹⁸ Baxter, Letter to various Ministers in Penrith, Cumberland, dated October 1653, printed in Baxter, *Reliquiae*, at pp.164-166

⁶⁹⁹ Baxter, *Reformed Pastor*, pp.134-135, and Baxter, *Reliquiae*, Pt.II., p.170

Whilst sorrowing over the ‘Tyrannical and unskilful Disputing [which] Clergie-men had made these thirteen-hundred years’, and grieving that ‘the Contentions of the Clergie have done far more hurt to the Christian World, than the most bloody Wars of Princes’,⁷⁰⁰ Baxter was yet willing to acknowledge his own failings, confessing, in 1675, that his own

experience since the year 1643 ... hath loudly called to me to Repent of my own prejudices, sidings and censurings of causes and persons not understood, and of all the miscarriages of my Ministry and life, which have been thereby caused; and to make it my chief work to call men that are within my hearing to more peaceable thoughts, affections and practices.⁷⁰¹

Commenting on the divisiveness apparent among Christian believers in Baxter’s lifetime, J.I. Packer argues that

his pitch was queered by Anglican hatred and suspicion of nonconformists as being all revolutionaries at heart, by the prevalence among Anglicans of High-Church theology which saw non-episcopal churches as no churches and their ministers as no ministers, and non-conformist bitterness and contempt for the persecuting Church of England, and [their] unwillingness ever to associate with it again, so that in the event [Baxter’s] argumentation was ignored throughout his lifetime.⁷⁰²

To these observations we would do well also to highlight the weighty divisions among the ‘godly’ clergy themselves; it was those conflicts which Baxter felt most deeply.

Baxter’s engagement in controversy did not confine itself to matters of dogma. In 1659, on the eve of the Restoration, he published *Five Disputations*, a book in which he engaged with the contentious issue of Church government and addressed those that ‘adhere to Prelacy’ and who maintained the Laudian principle that diocesan prelacy is an essential requirement of a true Church. The older Episcopal divines accepted, Baxter maintained, that though irregular, the ordination of the clergy by Presbyters was nevertheless valid. They acknowledged that the continental non-episcopal Reformed Churches of France, Savoy, Holland, Geneva and Helvetia etc., were true Churches and their pastors were true ministers of Christ, and as such they considered it lawful to join in communion with them. Even in 1641, Joseph Hall (1574-1656) — appointed in the same year as Bishop of Norwich — still recognized this position: ‘when we speak of Divine right, we meane not an expresse Law of God, requiring it upon the absolute necessity of the being of a Church ... but a Divine institution, warranting it where it is, and requiring it where it may be had’.⁷⁰³ Baxter maintained that, in the past, non-episcopal ordination had been recognised as valid

⁷⁰⁰ Baxter, *Catholic Theologie*, Preface, unpaginated

⁷⁰¹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰² Packer, *Baxter*, p.5

⁷⁰³ Hall, *Remonstrance*, pp.30-31

in England,⁷⁰⁴ but now those of the ‘new Episcopal’ persuasion denied this precedent, they ‘unchurch[ed] those Churches that are not Prelatical’, concluding that their ministers had no authority, their ordination was invalid and their churches were not true Churches whilst, at the same time, accepting the validity and ministry of the Church of Rome.⁷⁰⁵ *Five Disputations* asks whether it would be right, for the peace of the churches, to restore the then extruded episcopate? Baxter was aware of the difficulties, arguing that those who denied the validity of the present ministry in the churches were guilty of a grievous sin, maintaining nonetheless that for the sake of unity it was desirable for a form of prelacy to be restored. He further examined whether it would be profitable for a form of worship and liturgy to be restored, and whether human ceremonies were either necessary or profitable for the Church.⁷⁰⁶

Baxter’s complaint against the system of diocesan prelacy was that it fostered neglect of the pastoral responsibilities of the bishop. In the early Church the bishop was a teacher, an overseer who took care of each member of his flock, knowing, in the words of Ignatius, each of them by name. He was to admonish them, confirm and rule them. He must care for the poor, visit the sick and pray with them. How could a diocesan bishop possibly fulfil these obligations? ‘All you Inhabitants of Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Middlesex, Kent, Worcestershire, &c. how many of your Parishes did ever hear a Bishop preach the Gospel to them?’ he asks.⁷⁰⁷ Baxter was in sympathy with Archbishop Ussher’s offered *Reduction of Episcopacie*, the import of which we have observed above.⁷⁰⁸ Baxter’s objections to the Presbyterian system included reservations regarding the involvement of lay ruling-elders; he found the stricter Presbyterian system little different from diocesan prelacy in its reliance on secular powers. Moreover, he considered the structure took away the responsibility for discipline from the parish, and finally considered Presbyterians to be too intolerant of those that differed from them.⁷⁰⁹ For Baxter the ability of the local minister to exercise discipline over his congregation was a major concern in his own refusal to subscribe.

But, I maintain, Baxter’s concerns over Church order were also driven by theological convictions related to the nature of the Church, its ministry, what it is that constitutes the Church, and who is entitled to receive its benefits. In the light of all the foregoing my

⁷⁰⁴ Wood, *Church Unity*, cites examples, pp.34-39

⁷⁰⁵ Baxter, *Five Disputations*, p.8

⁷⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, Frontispiece

⁷⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.22-23

⁷⁰⁸ See above, p.90

⁷⁰⁹ Thomas, ‘Reconcilers’, pp.48-49

assertion is that, on the evidence we have from Baxter's involvement, any suggestion that the Puritans in the seventeenth century presented a united force in the face of ungodliness is hugely problematic, and it was divergence over doctrine that was at the forefront of the points at issue. Baxter and Owen, whilst respecting each other as godly men, nevertheless were divided not only in their stance on Church polity but also on doctrine. Both expressed strong arguments in favour of tolerance of what they each considered non-essentials yet they remained unable to unite in fellowship.

The question that confronts us, and is an inquiry which arises from this thesis, is: can it be justified for Christians to divide over doctrine? Certainly, as we have seen, in spite of his nonconformity Baxter's intent was to resist this divisive trend. He was ahead of his time in his ecumenical desire to unite in fellowship with those with whom he differed on matters of doctrine as well as Church practice. Baxter's plea was for a 'Simple Catholik Christianity ... the Love and Unity and Concord which are its Ligaments and Essential parts'. He rejected all divisions, hatred and contention.⁷¹⁰ He refused to be categorized, arguing that he was a Christian, 'a Meer Christian', and his Church was 'the Christian Church, ... visible where ever the Christian Religion and Church hath been visible'. 'I am of that Party which is ... against Parties', Baxter insisted: his 'party' was the Universal Church, the Church Catholic, in other words, 'the Body of Christ on Earth'.⁷¹¹

For this stance he was vilified unmercifully by the contentious Calvinist Independent, Edward Bagshaw (1629/30-1671) who considered him a deserter to the Nonconformist cause in his advocacy of a 'middle way', his acknowledgement of the legitimacy of the parish church, and his occasional conformity.⁷¹² Baxter was having none of that: his ecumenical view of the Catholicity of the Church enabled him to associate in fellowship with 'Protestants, the Calvinists, or Lutherans, the Papists, the Greeks, [and] the AEthiopians'. Any attempt to find the Universal Church within a particular group is for 'silly souls' and can only lead to Bedlam: 'it is never any one of them, but all together that are truly Christians'.⁷¹³ He accepted that there are true believers, 'blessed souls with Christ', amongst Roman Catholics, and of the French Catholic nobility he declares, 'I cannot but read them with a great deal of Love and Honour'.⁷¹⁴ Even an Anabaptist 'may yet be a penitent and godly person, and be saved'.⁷¹⁵ The definition of a Christian is far wider than

⁷¹⁰ Baxter, *Cure*, Preface, unpaginated

⁷¹¹ Baxter, *Church-History*, p.9

⁷¹² Keeble, 'Bagshaw'

⁷¹³ Baxter, *True Catholick*, pp.65-67

⁷¹⁴ Baxter, *Grotian*, p.10

⁷¹⁵ Baxter, *Reformed Pastor*, p.198

can ever be confined to sectarian or party boundaries. ‘Every man that doth heartily Believe in God the Father, Sonne and holy Ghost, by a faith that worketh by love, is a true Christian’.⁷¹⁶

In the light of these statements, what are we to make of Baxter’s own nonconformity, and his willingness, for the rest of his life, to live in separation from those who, by his own definition, were fellow believers? We are indebted here not only to Baxter’s own frequent and lengthy record of events, his own declared reasoning behind his costly and controversial stance, and to the reactions of his critics, but also to Geoffrey N. Nuttall⁷¹⁷ and Keeble — amongst others — for their intensive research into the life of this great Puritan thinker.

In his autobiography, *Reliquiae*, Baxter identified at length the issues that divided those who subscribed to the conditions of the 1662 Uniformity Act and those who did not. Having given the ‘Reasons of their several Ways’ among the Conformists, themselves divided among the Prelatists, the Conforming Presbyterians, willing and unwilling, and the Latitudinarians, he continued — in order that ‘the Controversie itself may be better understood’ — by citing the full wording of The Solemn League and Covenant, the Subscription, and the Declaration and Oath of Canonical Obedience required by the Uniformity Act.⁷¹⁸ ‘The Nonconformists, who take not this Declaration, Oath, Subscription, &c. are of divers sorts’, they are not all agreed on all points, ‘but all are agreed that it is not lawful to do all that is required’.⁷¹⁹

The objections of the ejected covered the impositions demanded by the Act, with its penalty for the failure to subscribe, and the requirement of usage without granting any tolerance for conscience sake. There were those who refused to conform because, having covenanted to reform the Church, they maintained that they would be rendered covenant breakers and backsliders if they now pledged themselves to anything that, in their estimation, remained yet to be reformed.⁷²⁰ Others, more contentiously driven, objected to association with ‘the Prophane and Vitious and Debaucht and Scandalous [who] fall in with that Party in the Church that are for Prelacy and Liturgy’, not the least for their oppression of those ‘who differ in their Sentiments from them about these Matters’.⁷²¹ In this uncompromising stance such Nonconformists saw no grounds for association with

⁷¹⁶ Baxter, *True Catholick*, pp.16-17

⁷¹⁷ Nuttall, *Baxter*

⁷¹⁸ Baxter, *Reliquiae*, Pt.II., pp.389-394

⁷¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.394

⁷²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.395

⁷²¹ *Ibid.*, p.394

'Imposters' who have 'set themselves to the debauching of the Consciences of the Kingdom, and to the extirpation of Natural Honesty, ... for us to joyn with them that are in the way to Wrath, is the way to be partakers of their Plagues'. There remained little grounds for compromise, let alone unity, for those who were unable to recognise even the validity of the Christian standing of those within the prelatical party in the Church. Not all agreed with this intransigence, for against them, Baxter reported, were the moderates who were prepared to concede that the 'sin' was understandable given the 'aggravation' heaped on the Conformists over past years:

It must be remembred, that among the Nonconformists there is a Party of Sectaries, that Rebelled against all the Governours that were over them, and cut off the King's Head, when they had conquered those that are now against them ... and sequestred their Estates: And that such great Provocation may ... greatly exasperate even temperate Men.⁷²²

Baxter then turned to the dispute over bishops. The extremists were opposed to all bishops, as distinct from presbyters, allowing only for a form of temporary presidency or moderatorship. These objectors were in the minority, whereas the greater proportion of those in Baxter's acquaintance were prepared to accept a modified episcopacy as 'contrary to no Law of God'. They argued that it would be incredible if the Apostles had been against 'Primitive Episcopacy' if it were found that no Church or Person had been demonstrably opposed to it until after it had been universally accepted by all Churches.⁷²³

Of primary concern to Baxter was the misuse of the powers of discipline and authority vested in the Diocesan, allegedly as of divine right. Episcopal jurisdiction he considered a process which had failed in its pastoral duties and in its responsibility to correct and punish. The parish priests had their flocks imposed upon them, for they had 'no power to judge what Persons of their Parish shall be confirmed, or admitted into the number of Adult Communicants'. Apart from their preaching and admonition they had no power of excommunication over 'Drunkards, Whoremongers, Prophane Swearers, Cursers, Railers', and they had no freedom to judge 'who[s]e Children [they] shall baptize; but must refuse none, though the Parents be professed Heathens or Infidels'.⁷²⁴ In *Christian Concord* Baxter bewailed the fact that by so doing, 'we do hainously reproach and dishonour the Christian profession, by suffering obstinate rebels to go under the name of Christians and Church-members. ... we occasion the infection of our flocks ... by suffering good and bad to have

⁷²² *Ibid.*, p.395

⁷²³ *Ibid.*, p.396

⁷²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.396-397

equal familiarity ... and so a little leaven may leaven the whole lump'.⁷²⁵ Some bishops, he complained, were more bent on exercising discipline over the Ministers:

those that wear not the Surplice, that Baptize without the Cross, that omit the Common Prayer, that refuse to Baptize any Infant; or that deliver the Lord's Supper to any that kneel not in receiving it; or that so receive it without kneeling; that stand no[t] up at the Gospel, that bow not at the Name Jesus.

Such concerns were seen, incredibly, as taking precedence over the disciplining of 'Drunkards and Fornicators',⁷²⁶ who continued to communicate whilst others, who for conscience sake and out of fear of committing idolatry, refused to kneel: such devout men and women were considered unworthy of the sacrament,⁷²⁷ which not only caused the 'Believer's heart to bleed', but it also 'lamentably conduceth to the hardening of the Heathens and Infidels of the World, and hindering their Conversion to the Christian Faith'.⁷²⁸

In summary, we find Baxter, this great advocate of ecumenical relationships, divided for the latter decades of his life from those with whom he declared himself willing to associate in fellowship. He was driven from the Church by requirements to conform that transgressed his conscience and those whom he wished to support, fellow Puritans who were suffering in like fashion. These certainly included requirements to obey on matters of Church order and government, but it was his theological convictions, driven by his understanding of Scripture's teaching, that formed the basis of his concerns. He and his fellow Puritans were required to make written and public declarations endorsing Church doctrines as wholly in accord with the Word of God which they were unable to accept, and that was a step too far: to do so would be an act of perjury: his conscience could not permit it. From the Conformist standpoint the blame lay with the Puritan schismatics who were making unreasonable theological demands in their refusal to accept the teaching and authority of the Church: their insistence on purity of doctrine in every detail was the cause of this great division. Conformist concerns were likewise driven by doctrinal convictions based on their own biblical interpretations.

As we turn now to examine evidence from other Puritans, ejected or separated from the national Church, shall we find the same trends as with Baxter? First, let us consider the fellow Puritan, and Independent divine, John Owen, the friend and associate, at least for a time, of Oliver Cromwell.

⁷²⁵ Baxter, *Christian Concord*, p.30

⁷²⁶ Baxter, *Reliquiae*, Pt.II., p.397

⁷²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.404

⁷²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.406

b. John Owen and Independency

John Owen was undoubtedly a major force amongst seventeenth-century Puritans, renowned for his godliness, his commentaries and doctrinal expositions. His writings are arousing something of a resurgence of interest, especially amongst Reformed theologians, and they have the benefit of a modern edition of his works, published in the 1960s, in sixteen volumes.⁷²⁹ He was born, in 1616, to Puritan parents in the Oxfordshire village of Stadham and, ironically, he died on St. Bartholomew's Day, August 24, in 1683. Owen maintained that he was averse to controversy. 'I confesse', he claimed, 'I would rather, ... spend all my time ... in making up and healing the breaches and Schismes that are amongst Christians, then one hour in justifying our divisions'.⁷³⁰ In reality, he was at the forefront of the doctrinal disputes of his day, his epitaph recording that 'in polemical theology, with more than herculean strength, he strangled three poisonous serpents, the Arminian, the Socinian, and the Roman'.⁷³¹

Owen graduated BA from Oxford in 1632 and MA in 1635, and later spent seven years studying for the BD degree. Disillusioned with the Laudian influence now dominant at Oxford, Owen decided to leave the university, becoming chaplain to Sir Robert Dormer (1610-1643) of Ascott, near Wing, Buckinghamshire, soon after accepting a position with John, Lord Lovelace (1615/16-1670) of Hurley, Berkshire.⁷³² Lovelace supported the royalist cause at the onset of civil strife in 1642, so Owen moved to London, where he published his first work, *A Display of Arminianism* (1643), a critique of Arminian doctrine which he addressed to the Lords and Gentlemen of the Committee for Religion. Arminianism was seen by Owen as the first 'sowing and spreading of these Tares in the Field of the Church,' a heresy which brought 'divisions ... of heart'. Regrettably, he acknowledged, 'open bitter contentions, to the losse of Ecclesiasticall peace, have beene stirred up amongst us about them'.⁷³³

Arguing for God's sovereignty over all his creation in every respect, extending to the predestination of the elect to glory and of the reprobate to eternal punishment from before the foundation of the world, Owen's advocacy of Calvinist Reformed doctrine was uncompromising. His contention was that Arminians, by their doctrine, seek 'to exempt

⁷²⁹ Owen, *Works*

⁷³⁰ Owen, *Of Schisme*, p.11

⁷³¹ An excerpt from Owen's epitaph by Thomas Gilbert (*bap.* 1613, *d.* 1694), translated from the Latin by J. I. Packer in Packer, *Quest*, p.192

⁷³² Toon, *Owen*, pp.8-10

⁷³³ Owen, *Display*, A3r

themselves from Gods jurisdiction, to free themselves from the supreme dominion of his all-ruling providence, choosing not to live, and move, in him: but to have an absolute independent power, in all their actions'.⁷³⁴ They were in denial, he argued, of God's unchangeable eternal decrees, they brought into question the prescience, or foreknowledge of God, they refuted God's all-governing providence in its effectual power over men's hearts, their thoughts, wills and every action, and they refused to submit to the irresistible and uncontrollable power of God's will.⁷³⁵ Their great Arminian 'idol' was 'free will', and their opposition to the doctrine of original sin, with their repeated insistence that we cannot be held responsible for sins that we did not freely choose to commit, was 'plaine Pelagianisme obruded on us, without either welt or guard'.⁷³⁶ His arguments are cogent, but what is not clear from Owen's proposition is how it is possible to reject an 'irresistible power', and how Arminians can be charged with 'choosing' not to live under God's sovereignty, if they have no free-will? This question is related to the paradox which J.I. Packer refers to as an 'antinomy', the irreconcilable contradistinction which he perceives between the equally essential biblical principles of God's sovereignty and the individual's responsibility for his/her actions. God 'orders and controls all things, human actions among them', he argues, yet 'he holds every man responsible for the choices he makes and the courses of action he pursues'. 'To our finite minds this is inexplicable'.⁷³⁷ Ours is not to question, but to accept the incomprehensible. This is a notion in denial of the alternative, essentially Arminian response, which maintains that the alleged paradox is a misconception. Effectively it implies that Scripture contradicts itself, and to argue that the contradistinction is 'inexplicable' is an evasive explanation which not only weakens the case, it renders the debate closed. There is no paradox in the mind of the Arminian: God is indeed sovereign, and in his sovereignty he decrees that the individual be given freedom to make a responsible choice between good and evil, between submission and rebellion. We are the first cause of our actions: we are moral free agents, and the unrestricted choices we make are decisions for which we will be justly held accountable. Such concepts were anathema to Owen.

Whilst quick to tackle the supposed error of others, Owen was not himself to escape accusations of heterodoxy. Charged, not least by Baxter, with Antinomianism in his assertion that justification is granted solely by the independent sovereign divine decree,

⁷³⁴ *Ibid.*, p.2

⁷³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.2-3

⁷³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.28, and p.73

⁷³⁷ Packer, *Evangelism*, p.18, and pp.22-23

irrespective of works, established from eternity, Owen insisted that ‘we allow no faith ... whereby we are justified, but what virtually and radically contains in it universal obedience, as the effect is in the cause, the fruit in the root’.⁷³⁸ Despite this assurance this division of opinions the two great Puritan divines were never able fully to resolve.

Owen was known to have read the books of his opponents; what would he have made of Taylor’s works? On doctrinal issues, there would be considerable areas of disagreement, but to charge an Arminian such as Taylor with wishing to free himself from God’s jurisdiction is difficult to sustain. To read Taylor’s work is to appreciate that his readiness to submit to the will of God in godliness and holiness was second to none. He was intensely desirous of being compliant to God’s sovereign will. What he would not accept was an interpretation of sovereignty which means that everything — including our sin — happens as an absolute necessity, that every blink of the eyelid, every deceitful lie, and every act of adultery, every blasphemy, was autonomously predestined to happen by the divine will. That for Taylor was an abhorrent dogma: it is never God’s sovereign will that is the first cause of our transgression; we sin as a result of our own free and deliberate choice, thereby rendering ourselves culpable. Men and women attempt to break from God’s jurisdiction by their own deliberate acts of rebellion, not by the force of an irresistible divinely ordained impulse, nor because of their doctrinal stance on free-will or on original sin. It was ‘heretical’ views such as these that Owen sought to refute, a stance that he had to redouble when confronted with the same arguments expressed by another Puritan, his fellow Independent, John Goodwin.⁷³⁹

Display of Arminianism brought Owen much public attention and the living of the sequestered rectory of Fordham in Essex, an area strongly supportive of Parliament. By 1644, Owen had already espoused Presbyterian views on Church government, as evidenced in *The Duty of Pastors and People*,⁷⁴⁰ and these views were to evolve further as a result of reading John Cotton’s *The Keyes of the Kingdom of Heaven* (1644). As he acknowledged in 1657, in a written defence of Cotton,

I sometimes apprehended the Presbyteriall Synodicall Government of Churches, to have been fit to be received ... I now professe my selfe to be satisfied, that I was then under a mistake; and that I doe now own, and have for many yeares lived in the way and practice of that called Congregationall.⁷⁴¹

⁷³⁸ Owen, *Justification*, p.96

⁷³⁹ Below, pp.177-178

⁷⁴⁰ Owen, *Duty*

⁷⁴¹ Owen, *Defence*, p.62

Cotton (1585-1652) defined the visible Church as ‘a Mystycall body, whereof Christ is the head, the members all Saints called out of the world, and united together in one Congregation by an holy Covenant to worship the Lord, and to edifie one another in all his holy Ordinances’.⁷⁴² God has set ministers in his Church, some extraordinary, such as apostles, prophets and evangelists, some ‘ordinary and perpetuall’, such as bishops and deacons. The ministry of a bishop is that of an elder in the local congregation:

Of Bishops who are also called Elders, God hath ordained two sorts; Ruling Elders, and such as labour in word and in Doctrine commonly called Pastors and Teachers all of them to watch over one certain Flocke, the Church of a particular Congregation.⁷⁴³

The ruling elders apply Church discipline, the pastors and teachers teach and care spiritually for the flock, whilst the deacons see to the practical needs of the entire congregation, especially widows and their families. Two years later, in an annex to a sermon to the House of Commons preached and published in April 1646, Owen advocated the toleration of such independent views on Church government, permitting congregations of the godly to meet separately alongside the parish church which remained under Presbyterian control,⁷⁴⁴ but such toleration was not to be extended to Roman Catholics nor Laudians; the sermon reveals his abhorrence of both.⁷⁴⁵

In words that would prove to be prophetic this sermon echoed Baxter’s views in its plea for toleration to be exercised amongst the Reformed, where divisive factions and sects ‘who are very confident they have found out the only way’, express themselves with ‘bigge’ words that ‘have made us believe we are mortall enemies. ... I doubt not that it will be bitternesse unto us all in the end’.⁷⁴⁶ The great issue was perceived to be Church government but, argued Owen, the Kingdom of Jesus Christ doesn’t ‘consist in forms, outward order, positive rules and externall Government’, but Christ within us. The ‘litigant[s]’ should ‘seriously consider ... whether the mystery of godlines [is] like to be propagated by it’.⁷⁴⁷ In 1672, Owen was still maintaining that

it must be acknowledged that there hath been a sinful decay of Love amongst Professors of the Gospel in this Nation, if not a violent casting of it out, by such prejudices and corrupt Affections, as wherewith it is wholly inconsistent.⁷⁴⁸

⁷⁴² Cotton, *Keyes*, p.1

⁷⁴³ *Ibid.*, p.2

⁷⁴⁴ Owen, *Vision*, pp.46-56, and Greaves, ‘Owen’

⁷⁴⁵ Owen, *Vision*, p.29

⁷⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.49

⁷⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴⁸ Owen, *Discourse*, pp.4-5

Writing in 1646 in ‘a fervent desire to prevent all further division and separation, disunion of mindes amongst godly men’, Owen acknowledged that there is a ‘paucity of positive rules in the Scripture for Church-Government with the great difficulty of reducing them to practise in these present times’. This is evidenced, he argues, ‘by the endlesse disputes, and irreconcilable differences of [the] godly’.⁷⁴⁹ Given these intractable disagreements it yet remains the duty of all Christian men to complain of the Church’s divisions even though it is beyond their power to remedy them. Such complaints will give testimony to their desire for a cure of such evils. This ‘can be no more than what Love unto the Publick Good requireth of us’.⁷⁵⁰

So we find in Owen’s works, as early as 1646, evidence of one of the overarching problems for the Puritan agenda, their growing disunity. Owen protested that the situation was worsened because even those who complained of the state of the Church, ‘instead of a Rational discourse of the causes of such Divisions, and their Remedies, ... [they] enflame ... former wounds’ by introducing ‘matters of new contention and strife, to their great increase’.⁷⁵¹ Had he here his differences with Baxter in mind, when expressing these concerns?

In his analysis of the causes of division Owen argued, from his standpoint as an Independent that he, along with his fellows,

are condemned for Schismaticks by the Lutherans & Sacramentarian Sectarys, for no other *crime* in the world, but because we submit not to all they teach, for in no instituted Church *Relation* would they ever admit us to stand with them; which is as considerable an instance of the power of prejudice, as this Age can give. We are condemned for separation, by them who refuse to admit us into Union.⁷⁵²

His separation, Owen insisted, was an imposed separation, caused by the requirement, as an essential condition of unity to endorse, in contravention of the dictates of their consciences, the dogmas of those with whom they differed. The scrupulous were faced with ‘bloody persecution on the one hand, and cursed, intolerable [obligatory ?] toleration on the other’.⁷⁵³ When compared to the comparative unity being built up among the Conformists, enduring as they were the rigours of an imposed Puritan regime perceived as intolerant, we find cogent reasons for the breakdown of negotiations for an inclusive settlement at the Restoration. The Conformists, relatively, spoke with one voice. The Puritans for all Owen’s and Baxter’s efforts did not.

⁷⁴⁹ Owen, ‘Short defensative’, p.55

⁷⁵⁰ Owen, *Discourse*, p.2

⁷⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p.3

⁷⁵² Owen, *Of Schisme*, p.9

⁷⁵³ *Ibid.*, p.14

By 1646 Owen was minister of the gospel at Coggeshall in Essex, a stronghold of Puritanism where the church had experienced Puritan ministry since the beginning of the century.⁷⁵⁴ It was there that he produced probably his most enduringly valued work, *Death of Death* (1647), a definitive and controversial book in which he expounded the orthodox Calvinistic doctrine of limited atonement, defined by Toon as ‘those upon whom God set His love before the creation of the world were the ones, and the only ones, for whom Christ died’.⁷⁵⁵ Toon has found a commendation from two Presbyterian members of the Westminster Assembly — Stanley Gower (1600?-1660) and Richard Byfield (1598-1664) — who ‘describe Owen’s work as “pulling down the rotten house of Arminianism upon the head of those Philistines who would uphold it”’.⁷⁵⁶ J.I. Packer, employing a rather less emotive turn of phrase, considers that ‘no comparable exposition of the work of redemption as planned and executed by the Triune Jehovah has ever been done since Owen published his’.⁷⁵⁷ The book is seen, by Packer, as a constructive, biblically based analysis of the plan of redemption, affirming an unanswered and unanswerable exposition of the gospel doctrine of limited atonement. Owen had rejected universal redemption as a grievous mistake and, Packer maintains, so should we. Packer is inflexible in his conclusions on this point: ‘an atonement of universal extent is a deprecated atonement. It has lost its saving power; it leaves us to save ourselves’. It is Owen’s doctrine, ‘clearly taught in plain text after plain text’, which is indeed ‘the Gospel of God and the catholic faith’.⁷⁵⁸ But for Packer in effect to affirm, for instance, that John Wesley’s universal atonement ‘gospel’ had ‘lost its saving power’ is unsustainable: the assertion is not proven in practice. Further, in his insistence that Owen’s exposition is ‘unanswered and unanswerable’, Packer has weakened his case, for answers abound; not all interpreters are quite as certain that Owen was right, including theologians, Kendall, J.R. Torrance⁷⁵⁹ from the Church of Scotland, and the American Baptist theologian, David L. Allen. Allen has a persuasive critique of Owen’s exposition of the doctrine of atonement, arguing, for example, that when Owen maintained that the word *kosmos* [world] in John 3: 16-17 designated: ‘they whom he intended to save, and none else, or he faileth of his purpose’⁷⁶⁰, then, Allen claims, ‘it is clear his theology precedes and determines his exegesis’.⁷⁶¹ Cooper

⁷⁵⁴ Toon, *Owen*, p.25

⁷⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p.27

⁷⁵⁶ Toon, *Owen*, p.27 For an exposition of Owen’s book see, Packer, *Quest*, pp.125-148

⁷⁵⁷ Packer, *Quest*, p.136

⁷⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵⁹ Torrance, ‘Limited Atonement’, p.32

⁷⁶⁰ Owen, *Death of Death*, pp.148-149

⁷⁶¹ Allen, ‘The Atonement’, p.79

maintains that Owen's written stance on this doctrine 'was the Achilles heel in his argument ... it is likely that his books failed to convince anyone beyond those who already agreed with him'.⁷⁶²

Yet another academic to question Packer's — and Owens' — views is Clifford, who, in a book published in the same year as *Quest*, makes a comparative study between the theology contained in the orthodox Calvinism of Owen, the moderate versions advocated by Baxter and Tillotson, and the Arminianism of Wesley. His research takes account of a number of analyses of Owen's work which have questioned his biblical interpretation.⁷⁶³ It was as a result of this project that Clifford came to question his own early acceptance of five-point Calvinism, which he had gained through reading Whitefield and Packer. Clifford argues that Dutch Arminianism was occasioned not as a response to the 'balanced biblical theology' of Calvin, but as a reaction to the 'rigidly systematic form' developed by his successor, Beza. Arminius, who studied under Beza in the 1580s, found himself unable to defend his master's doctrine of predestination, arriving at the view that Reformed theology, in the hands of Beza, had 'exceeded the bounds of the Protestant rule of faith in several respects'.⁷⁶⁴ Beza's high Calvinism had deviated from the theology of the Reformers, yet was endorsed by Perkins, and the Westminster Assembly of 1643-1649.⁷⁶⁵ Clifford argues that Owen saw that the central question in the Arminian-Calvinist controversy was the extent of the atonement. Whilst Clifford acknowledges that scholarly opinion remains divided he maintains that, judged by seventeenth-century doctrinal formulations, Calvin did not hold to a belief in the doctrine of limited atonement. Commenting on Matthew 26: 24, Calvin asserted that Christ's death 'has been ordained by the eternal decree of God for expiating the sins of the world'.⁷⁶⁶ On Romans 5: 18 Calvin further argued, 'though Christ suffered for the sins of the whole world, and is offered through God's benignity indiscriminately to all, yet all do not receive him'.⁷⁶⁷ 'In short,' says Clifford, 'Calvin was no Calvinist'. Owen exposes a failure to follow Calvin on this issue. In *Death of Death*, he was adamant:

It is denied that the death of Christ, in any place of Scripture, is said to be for "all men" or for "every man;" which, with so much confidence, is supposed, and imposed on us as a thing acknowledged.⁷⁶⁸

⁷⁶² Cooper, *Formation of Nonconformity*, pp.67-68

⁷⁶³ Clifford, *Atonement*, pp.9-11. It appears that Clifford did not have access to Packer's book at the time of publication.

⁷⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p.vii, p.69, and p.70

⁷⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p.78, and p.75

⁷⁶⁶ Calvin, *Harmony*, p.200, cited by Clifford, *Atonement*, p.74

⁷⁶⁷ Calvin, *Romans*, p.211, cited by Clifford, *Atonement*, p.148

⁷⁶⁸ Owen, *Death of Death*, p.62

In so doing, Clifford observes, he was following ‘a view of the atonement first expounded in the English Church by William Perkins, who in turn had been influenced by Theodore Beza’.⁷⁶⁹

Owen’s reliance on Scripture for confirmation of his views on the atonement is renowned for its Reformed orthodoxy; it is unquestionable. Along with Baxter, and indeed together with his ‘Arminian’ opponents, including Laud, Taylor, Hammond and John Goodwin, Owen’s acceptance of the Protestant rule of faith, centred on the Scriptures, was paramount. It is in the interpretation of Scripture that differences arise, not only in their respective understandings of what is meant by specific passages, but also in the realm of hermeneutics, how we interpret Scripture, our methodology. Owen had little patience with those who took the words of the Bible at face value. He was bound to, for he was confronted by those who insisted on a literal interpretation of the numerous apparently all inclusive words of Scripture relative to the plan of redemption. Did his opponents not argue, he asked, ‘as though the victory were surely theirs. ... the whole world, all, all men! – who can oppose it?’⁷⁷⁰ Owen in effect questions the perspicuity of Scripture when he insisted that these Bible texts must be understood by the application of the ‘rules of interpretation’, the context in which they are set, the ‘circumstances and scope’ of their origin, the sense of the words when used in other places. Those who declare, “‘Away with the gloss and interpretation; give us leave to believe what the word expressly saith”” are under a delusion. They deny ‘us the gift of interpretation agreeable to the proportion of faith’.⁷⁷¹ The force of Owen’s argument is clear, but the implications are unsettling: its fundamental weakness is that it leaves us with a Bible that can only be rightly interpreted by the scholarly, by those fortunate enough to be the recipients of this adequate ‘proportion of faith’. Scripture is subject to hermeneutical reasoning: it cannot speak for itself. The process might be considered inevitable, but the unsettling consequence is that the average Christian becomes reliant on the interpretative skills of the edified, and unfortunately they are far from being consistent; interpretations offered by biblical expositors have proved to be ambivalent authorities.

In the summer of 1648, Owen was appointed chaplain to the parliamentary Army at the siege of Colchester, and in this office he preached sermons at two thanksgiving services held following their victory over the Royalists late in August. These sermons were

⁷⁶⁹ Clifford, *Atonement*, p.78. Clifford refers, in support, to Kendall, *Calvin*, p.54ff

⁷⁷⁰ Owen, *Death of Death*, p.146

⁷⁷¹ *Ibid.* and Clifford, *Atonement*, p.142

subsequently published, revealing the thoughts of a man who appears to demonstrate little antipathy for the brutalities of war, except insofar as the righteous are caused to suffer from the heinous crimes of their opponents. This for Owen was a just war against godlessness, and there was no doubt on which side the Almighty was to be found in the conflict. Preaching from Habakkuk 3: 1-9, Owen declared that the victory was to be seen as a manifestation of God's sovereignty, a righteous judgement on the enemies of the godly. 'Much of the greatnesse and intensenesse of his love to his own, is seene in his Enemies ruine'.⁷⁷² With like triumphalist rhetoric, Owen declared that the godly should not be troubled by tumults assailing their ways. 'God is measuring out his childrens portion, giving them their bread in season, viewing for them the lot of their inheritance'. It was all part of God's plan for his world. 'The Church being ... delivered, Haman must be hanged [Esther 7:10] ... It is the fall of heathenish tyranny, by the prevailing of the Gospell, ... Rome and Constantinople, Pope and Turk, are preserved, for a day and an houre, wherein they shall fall and be no more'.⁷⁷³ For this chaplain, this was no time for tolerance, the healing of wounds, of extending the hand of compassion, or of loving your enemies. That day would be 'the day of the Lords vengeance, the yeare of Recompences for the controversy of Sion, Isa. 34.8'.⁷⁷⁴ In January 1648/9 Charles I was executed for treason. Toon argues that it is clear from Owen's actions and sermons at the time that he believed the execution was part of God's righteous judgement, punishment for false religion and tyranny.⁷⁷⁵ In this view, he was in direct variance with many other Puritans, not least with Baxter. The disturbing irony is that comparable rhetoric was employed by both Parliamentarians and their Royalist enemies alike whenever they prevailed. Both sides were convinced that their cause could be equated with the will of the Almighty, and that their enemy was under God's judgement. Demonstrably, dogmatic contention remains, by its very nature, untrustworthy.

In 1651, after years in which Owen served as chaplain to Cromwell's army in both Ireland and Scotland, covering both the infamous capture of Drogheda and the battle between the Presbyterian Scots and the Independent English at Dunbar,⁷⁷⁶ he was appointed Dean of Christ Church, Oxford. Then in 1652 Cromwell, as Chancellor of the University, made him Vice-Chancellor. In these positions he immediately set about the task of re-forming College and University life and, during his seven years at Christ Church, Toon maintains that

⁷⁷² Owen, *Eben-ezer*, p.30

⁷⁷³ *Ibid.*, p.34

⁷⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p.35

⁷⁷⁵ Toon, *Owen*, p.34

⁷⁷⁶ Owen was not present in person at either battle.

he ... tried to establish the whole life of the College upon the Word of God. But of necessity, since he was a man of the seventeenth century, much of what he thought was agreeable to the Scriptures was in fact a reflection of the Protestant, Puritan culture of his day.⁷⁷⁷

As Dean and Vice-Chancellor Owen's 'outlook and fairly radical religious viewpoint' rendered him something of a misfit in a University which had a tradition of 'Anglicanism' and Royalism.⁷⁷⁸ He suffered criticism from Conformist and extreme radical alike, the former for his anti-prelatical views, and from the latter who were incensed that Owen should be associated with the old order and its institutions at all.⁷⁷⁹ This, and like charges, he refutes in *Reflections on a Slandereous Libel* (1655).⁷⁸⁰ It was in this period that Owen engaged in meetings and correspondence with the prominent Conformist, Hammond, in which the issue in debate was the early Church growth of episcopacy, and whether or not Ignatian documents on the subject were genuine, Owen insisting that they were not. Toon maintains that modern scholarship, whilst endorsing the authenticity of the evidence, remains ambivalent about the early development of episcopacy.⁷⁸¹

1651 also saw the publication of John Goodwin's highly controversial book, *Apolytrosis*. Nurtured in the seed-bed of Puritanism at Cambridge, Goodwin was for many years the incumbent at St. Stephen's Coleman Street in London which, as we have noted, was a centre of Puritan influence.⁷⁸² In his book — addressed to Benjamin Whichcote (1609-1683), Provost of King's College, Cambridge, and Vice-Chancellor of the University — Goodwin, having now become both an Independent and a virtual Arminian, was 'propounding ... the Death of Christ for All Men, without exception of any ... the Universality of Redemption by Christ'.⁷⁸³ This was followed by a 'digression' in seven chapters in which he refuted the doctrine of final perseverance, arguing that Scripture 'maintaineth a possibility of a defection in the Saints themselves, or true Believers, unto destruction'. Goodwin denied that such a doctrine takes away the grounds of assurance, insisting that his doctrine had 'as faire and full a consistency with the Peace and Comfort of the Saints, as that contrary to it, ... that of the two it is of a far better and healthful complexion to make a Nurse for them'.⁷⁸⁴ The book resulted, after three years' work, in a lengthy response from Owen, *The Doctrine of the Saints Final Perseverance*, in which he argued

⁷⁷⁷ Toon, *Owen*, p.59

⁷⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p.79

⁷⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p.58

⁷⁸⁰ Owen, *Works*, XVI, pp.271-280

⁷⁸¹ Toon, *Owen*, pp.58-59

⁷⁸² Coffey, *Goodwin*, p.2

⁷⁸³ Goodwin, *Apolytrosis*, p.73, and p.97

⁷⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p.155

that Goodwin's thesis struck at the very nature of God himself and his eternal purposes. It fatally undermined the covenant of Grace and the efficacy of Christ's redeeming work.⁷⁸⁵ The purposes of God are immutable, they cannot be interrupted and will infallibly produce those ends for which they are intended.⁷⁸⁶

During the early years of the 1650s, in which Owen served as an advisor to Cromwell, he continued to publish both pastoral and controversial works, these latter in response to attacks on his own position. His engagement in contemporary religious controversy reached a new peak with the publication of his book *Of Schisme* (1657), in which he countered accusations of schism brought against the Protestant rift from Rome, and against the Independent fragmentation from the national Church. Citing I Timothy 6: 5 and 2 Timothy 3: 5, Owen insisted that 'whether it [Independency] be Schisme or no ... [it] is commanded by the Holy Ghost'. To accede to the demands of those who refuse themselves to be reformed would be a neglect of his duty and in so doing he would be despising the privileges bought for him by Christ. His 'duty' was founded on the conviction that he was right, and he asks whether it would be a unity instituted by Christ, 'that I must for ever associate my selfe with wicked and prophane men in the worship of God, to the unspeakable detriment ... of my own soule?'⁷⁸⁷ The wicked and prophane are defined as those who 'have neither faith in Christ, nor love to the Saints: and so have part and fellowship neither in the union nor communion of the Catholick Church'.⁷⁸⁸ This book, alongside *A Review of the True Nature of Schisme* (1657) and *A Defence of Mr John Cotton* (1657), reveal Owen's uncompromising Independent principles, but which Toon surprisingly considers display 'what was for those times a generous spirit and lack of acrimony'.⁷⁸⁹

Schism is defined by Owen not as a break from a Church institution — which he describes as 'Schisme in the Ecclesiasticall notion, ... the breach of the union of a church'⁷⁹⁰ — but as a break from the 'Fundamentalls, or first Principles, which are justly argued by many to be clear, perspicuous, few'. For true unity to be preserved, 'it is required that all those grand and necessary Truths of the Gospell, ... be ... believed, as to be outwardly and visibly professed'.⁷⁹¹ To those who charge him with schism he argues,

they that will make good a charge against us, that we are departed from the Unity of the Church Catholick[,] it is incumbent on them to evidence, that we either doe not believe and

⁷⁸⁵ Owen, *Saint's perseverance*, p.68

⁷⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p.63

⁷⁸⁷ Owen, *Of Schisme*, p.263

⁷⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p.105

⁷⁸⁹ Toon, *Owen*, p.94

⁷⁹⁰ Owen, *Review*, p.126

⁷⁹¹ Owen, *Of Schisme*, p.134

make profession of all the Truths of the Gospell. ... profession of those Truths is required, to enstate a man in the unity of the Church visible.⁷⁹²

For Owen agreement on dogma was the essential criteria for unity, not adherence to an ecclesiastical organisation, or even a shared relationship with God. Owen argued that it is the acceptance of those indispensable truths that renders a man or woman a member of the 'Church Catholick'. For those who challenged him, Owen had failed to explain why it was necessary to split from fellow Christians who remained in the Established Church when, as they maintained, they also accepted 'all the Truths of the Gospell'.

Foremost among Owen's critics, who were convinced that his separation was schismatic, was Daniel Cawdrey (1587/8-1664) — a leading Presbyterian, a member of the Westminster Assembly and, in 1644, appointed minister of St. Martin's in the Fields — who published *Independencie* (1657), a trenchant response to *Of Schisme*.⁷⁹³ 'The Crime of Schisme', he argued, 'is so heinous ... and so dangerous ... to the Church of God ... that no Invectives against the evils of it can wel be too great or high'.⁷⁹⁴ A more temperate response came from the pen of Giles Firmin (1613/14-1697), a friend of Baxter, who, when ejected in 1662, returned to the practice of medicine. He published, in 1658, *Of Schisme in England*, which sought to establish a biblical justification for schism, asserting that causeless separation was a sin. He concluded that if Congregationalists were not guilty of schism, then there is no such thing as schism in this world. The tone of his work was nevertheless conciliatory:

it is a trouble to me that I have cause in any point to appear [to] cross the Doctor ... whom I have so entirely loved and honoured, and do still both honour and love.⁷⁹⁵

It was in 1657, the year of these publications of his, that Owen resigned as Vice-Chancellor, and he was ejected from his position as Dean of Christ Church in 1659/60, after which he moved to his estate at Stadhampton. Unlike moderate Presbyterian Puritans such as Baxter, he was unable, in the negotiations that followed the Restoration, to contemplate accepting ministry in a national Church that retained episcopacy, even in an amended form. Nor would he and his fellow Independents submit to a required formal liturgy. His non-negotiable principles insisted that he be allowed the freedom to worship God as his conscience was guided by his understanding of the will of God as revealed in

⁷⁹² *Ibid.*, p.143

⁷⁹³ Cawdrey, *Independencie*

⁷⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, Preface, B1r

⁷⁹⁵ Firmin, *Of Schisme*, p.38

Scripture. Any national Church settlement that failed to provide comprehension of those principles was unacceptable: separation was the only option.

Owen's stance on these principles was made apparent in his 1662 publication *Discourse concerning Liturgies and their imposition*. Rites and ordinances had been imposed by teachers and leaders who had 'grown ... carnal in their spirits'. These ceremonies were considered by Owen to be impositions heaped upon those 'Divine Institutions' appointed 'by our blessed Saviour'. These rulers had unacceptably made those rites 'necessary to be observed by their Disciples, [and] ... pressed frequently upon the Consciences of men'.⁷⁹⁶ Owen's plea was for liberty of conscience to be granted to all holding to orthodox beliefs, freedom from the present persecution and intolerance. But given that such liberty of conscience includes, of necessity, liberty to disassociate on conscientious grounds, division results even among the 'orthodox'.

In his doctoral dissertation, Sungho Lee has demonstrated how Owen responded to accusations of schism in his ecclesiology. Unity was typically conceived to be a retained communion with the institutional 'catholic' Church. To separate from that Church was considered schism. Against that, 'Owen vindicates Nonconformity from the charge of schism by demonstrating that the unity of the church is ... unity in the truth from which Nonconformists are never separated and that unbiblical impositions are the real cause of schism'.⁷⁹⁷ Unity is based, in this thesis, on shared doctrinal beliefs, not on a shared relationship with God. Owen's problem — and Lee's, insofar as he accepts Owen's argument — is who defines the 'unbiblical impositions', for Owen was confronted by those who also insisted that it was their interpretation which was biblical, including their understanding of what constituted a biblical Church.

Based upon the evidence I am offering it could well be argued that this project is raising more questions than answers. The proposition which I seek to demonstrate is that division in the early modern English Church was driven by doctrine; if this proposition is accepted then what has to be addressed are the consequent implications. Owen was widely regarded in his day, and still is today, as an icon, a deeply religious man, a divine whose spirituality is to be respected for its intense commitment to God, whose devotion to Christ and his Gospel is without question. Owen is set on a pedestal, especially among Reformed theologians. But his insistence that unity must, of necessity, be based upon shared doctrinal beliefs meant that for him, not only must he divide, as we have seen, from those he considered overtly heretical, Roman Catholics, Socinians, the Laudians, John Goodwin and

⁷⁹⁶ Owen, *Liturgies*, pp.3-4

⁷⁹⁷ Lee, *All Subjects*, pp.11-12

the Arminians. He was also in dispute with the predominantly orthodox, with both Conformists remaining committed to the national Church, and also with fellow Puritans, conforming and nonconforming. Owen expressed his abhorrence of controversy, yet engaged in it nonetheless, with divisive consequences. He was prepared to divide with other Christians, who held to the same rule of faith, as indeed were those whom he opposed. Christians were divided over their understanding of the meaning of Scripture, which raises the whole question of the perspicuity of Scripture: is the biblical message singular and clear: are the Christian Scriptures accessibly coherent? As Mark D. Thompson asks, 'Can we really be certain about what it [the Bible] says or what it means?'⁷⁹⁸ He insists that we can: Scripture's 'viability does not ultimately depend upon the skill of the interpreter', it depends upon God.⁷⁹⁹ But, if that be the case, what do we do with the multiple interpretations that confront us? This question we will address further in the last chapter, although we acknowledge here, we do not have a straightforward solution to offer.

c. The 'Bartholomeans' and deprivation

On Sunday August 17, 1662, Samuel Pepys (1633-1703) recorded in his diary that he attended the morning and afternoon services at St. Dunstan's Fleet Street, where the rector, Dr. William Bates, preached his farewell sermons to packed congregations at both 8 a.m. and 1 p.m. In the morning, taking his text from Hebrews 13: 20, 'now the God of peace', Bates preached 'a very good sermon [with] very little in it to anything of the times'. He pursued his text 'again very well' in the afternoon, only making apologetic reference to his ejection at the close. Pepys records him as declaring 'that it is not my opinion, faction or humour that keeps me from complying with what is required of us, but something which after much prayer, discourse and study yet remains unsatisfied and commands me herein'.⁸⁰⁰ Bates was not, of course, the only one to find himself placed outside the national Church in the Autumn of 1662. He was joined by hundreds of Nonconformists unable to submit in conscience to the requirements of the Uniformity Act, and from the records we have of the farewell sermons of those soon to be deprived, his discourse was not untypical.

If there was one thing that characterised the Puritan in his approach to the events that followed the Restoration, it was his submission to the demands of conscience. In the multifaceted reactions to the requirements of the 1662 Act of Uniformity the godly saw themselves as answerable ultimately to God. How did they square this with opposing

⁷⁹⁸ Thompson, *Word*, p.18

⁷⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.132

⁸⁰⁰ Pepys, *Diary*, vol.III, pp.167-168

demands from secular authority? As Thomas Jacombe (1623/4-1687), rector of St. Martin Ludgate, confessed in the last sermon he preached before his ejection, 'it is the unfained desire of our soul, in all things to please God'.⁸⁰¹ The great majority of those deprived of their opportunity for ministry in the summer of 1662 had no wish to withdraw from ministry in the Church of England, but if the demands of conformity impinged upon their conscientious convictions, even for many moderate Presbyterians, then they were left with no alternative: they must obey the will of God as they, in their own individual way, saw it. It was God who would be their judge; neither the Church, nor the State, were recognised as primary arbiters of their actions; it had to be God's will, as revealed in Scripture. What is also apparent from their response is willingness, for many of them, to accept the consequences of their decision, imposed by authority, with little or no complaint.

On August 17, Thomas Case (*bap.* 1598, *d.* 1682), rector of St. Giles-in-the-Fields in the western outskirts of London, preached his closing sermon to his gathered congregation prior to his ejection on the following Sunday. The church building in which he stood had been rebuilt in a red brick Gothic style in the 1620s and re-consecrated by Laud when he was Bishop of London in 1630/1.⁸⁰² Case, a delegate at the Westminster Assembly in the 1640s, had been rector of the parish since 1654, and in 1660 he had been appointed by Parliament as a commissioner for the approbation of ministers. A Presbyterian opposed to the execution of Charles I and an active supporter of the Restoration cause, he was appointed a member, as a representative of the London clergy, of the commission which sailed to Holland to welcome back Charles II to England and the English throne in 1660.⁸⁰³ Yet now, just two years later, Case was preaching his last sermon at the church, a discourse based on Revelation 2: 5 in which he brought to a conclusion a series of expositions on Christ's call for repentance and reformation. Case was about to refuse submission to the very authority he had been party to establishing.

Case's address appears in a collection of farewell sermons, edited and published by Edmund Calamy senior (1600-1666)⁸⁰⁴ who, until his own ejection, was perpetual curate at St. Mary's Aldermanbury, a London parish with a strong Puritan tradition. The choice of contributors to the collection reflects Calamy's rigid Presbyterianism, and we should bear in mind when drawing conclusions from these sermons that this and other collections of the period include a sermon purporting to be Baxter's farewell address. 'Who did it, or to what

⁸⁰¹ Jacombe, 'Afternoon Sermon', p.94

⁸⁰² The church was again rebuilt in the 1730s.

⁸⁰³ Mullett, 'Case'

⁸⁰⁴ Calamy, *Exact Collection*

end I know not,' Baxter declared, 'but I took it as an injury, ... it was done without my knowledge and against my will'. He disowned these publications, his sermon having been 'taken by the Notary so imperfectly, that much of it was non-sence'.⁸⁰⁵

As we read the Calamy version of the Case address, we search in vain for any mention of the fated preacher's grievances, or any protest at his treatment and his suffering. No reference is made to the rigid stipulations found in the Uniformity Act, conditions which were about to cause his expulsion from his pulpit for his failure to conform. No complaint arises against his persecutors, indeed the sermon, as recorded in this version, might as well have been a regular address to his flock on any Sunday morning. There is no allusion to the fact that this was to be his last Sunday, nor are we told why it is that he has declined to subscribe, and the last paragraph is presented as an appeal to the generosity of his hearers: 'set apart some considerable part of your Estate, and account it as a hallowed thing, dedicated to God, ... that you may be ready on all occasions ... to bring out for the relief of the Poor'.⁸⁰⁶ The sermon, if this is a complete record, was approximately 6,400 words long, and would have taken up to an hour to preach. Pepys considered him a preacher having a typically Presbyterian noisy religious tone and 'very dull'⁸⁰⁷, but to read this version of his discourse is to be confronted with a classic example of Puritan biblical spirituality, devoid of rancour or bitterness, and it is an address that is typical of the many records of the farewell sermons that we have, preached by Nonconformists soon to be ejected from their Church. How accurate the printed version is of the sermon preached it is impossible to know. Case had published frequently in the 1640s and 1650s — including sermons preached before Parliament — and occasionally after his ejection, but I have found no record of any alternative version of this farewell sermon. The possibility of some form of reworking in the Calamy version, as with Baxter's sermon, has to be considered.

Not that Case failed to identify therein the maladies causing the woeful state of the English Church at this eventful time. The sorry state of affairs was seen as the consequence of the sins of Christians over the past twenty years, sins of self-interest and self-aggrandisement, transgressions that were detrimental to unity and peace. Case was not making accusations against his oppressors, but against all parties involved in the Church and its divisions over the last two decades, including himself and his congregation:

I tell you, Christians, we have been these late twenty years doing nothing else but sinning against God; ... While some had power in their hand to have done great things for God,

⁸⁰⁵ Baxter, *Directions*, Preface, unpaginated

⁸⁰⁶ Case, 'Sermon', p.114

⁸⁰⁷ Pepys, *Diary*, vol.IX, p.190

what did they do, but neglect the interest and trust in their hands, and fell a feathering their own nest, and building to themselves houses and names, ... and in the mean time a sea of errors hath been ready to overturn us.⁸⁰⁸

Among the 'special sins that we should repent of, and humble ourselves for', Case identified hypocrisy, pride and covetousness, uncharitable censoriousness, a want of forbearance among Christians, murmurings and grumbings, 'our indifferences as to matters of faith and doctrine', and the 'Epidemical sin of Self-seeking, and self-pleasing. ... All seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christs ... This hath been the source of all our miseries'.⁸⁰⁹ Now the faithful were going to suffer the consequences. 'We have been a long time in sinning, we had need be a long time in repenting'. But a house on fire is not quenched with tears; murmuring will not scatter the clouds. The issues were those that confront the individual's own integrity. The remedy was not to be found in the vilification of others, for 'Sin and Hypocrisie lies close and deep; therefore we must take pains, dig to the bottom, set up a Tribunal in our own Conscience, summon, try, judge ourselves over and over, in Gods presence'.⁸¹⁰ Case advocated 'reformation', not of the Church, but a reformation of life, a turning to God, and a return to the first works.⁸¹¹

Case was not alone in expressing such self-condemnatory rhetoric. Matthew Newcomen (*d.* 1669), in his farewell sermon at Dedham, Essex, argued:

I would desire, that every one of us might lay the blame nowhere so much, as on our selves, For certainly, we have procured these things to ourselves. I find our Predecessors, the Martyrs, when by a Law Religion was changed in the Nation, and Idollatry set up, they laid the blame not on the Law-makers, but on themselves, and their own hearts. One of them saith, All this is come upon us, because we did not live the Gospell; we were Gospellers in lip, but not in life: Much more doth it become us, whose sufferings are farre lesse, to blame ourselves more, then we blame any others.⁸¹²

Newcomen refused to condemn those that continued their ministry by conforming: one such was his elder brother, Thomas Newcomen (c1603-1665), who was to become prebendary at Lincoln after the Restoration.

David J. Appleby has published the results of a study of the farewell sermons, the 'Bartholomean oeuvre', and their authors, a review in which he seeks to re-establish 'a sense of the enormity of the event of Black Bartholomew's Day'. His thesis is that, whilst for the most part the Bartholomeans left the national Church peacefully, the language of their sermons should not be seen as 'mere exhortation[s] to comfort'. Appleby sees them as

⁸⁰⁸ Case, 'Sermon', p.102

⁸⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.95-101

⁸¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.108

⁸¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp.102-104

⁸¹² Newcomen, 'Sermon', p.162

a barrier to the full re-establishment of monarchical and ecclesiastical power, representing, particularly in their publications, a political threat to authority.⁸¹³ The term 'Bartholomean' he finds useful to describe the ejected clergy, a word by which he is able to differentiate them from those Puritans who remained in the Church of England, or who were separated at other times and from different motivations. Appleby has identified seventy-seven extant farewell sermons,⁸¹⁴ plus eight sermons by a trenchant Joseph Cooper (1635-1689), whilst diaries and near-contemporary accounts provided his research with further information on other valedictions. It is not the intention here to deconstruct in detail the conclusions proposed in Appleby's extensive analysis, but I shall be examining extrapolations that he draws from some of the farewell sermons, and I do question any suggestion that the farewell sermons covertly demonstrate a desire to subvert authority.

Appleby's overall thesis is a response to the perception among historians in the later decades of the twentieth century, analysts such as Cragg and Michael G. Finlayson, that the historical significance of Nonconformity after 1660 was minimal. This is a view that asserts that the 'influential figures were second rate in their ability ... they had no original thought'. Nonconformity was deemed to have made a minimal contribution to seventeenth-century politics.⁸¹⁵ It is no wonder, Appleby argues, that the Bartholomean oeuvre has received little attention given the assumption that the sermons had little 'potential to forestall or precipitate political change'. This he compares with the enthusiasm shown by historians, such as Hill, for the radical literature of the English Revolution.⁸¹⁶ Appleby sees things differently and he relies heavily in his assertions on the farewell sermons themselves. He maintains that,

politics and ideology were intrinsic to the construction of early modern sermons ... spiritual and secular concerns were often consciously synthesised in the farewell sermons, a discourse which serves to demonstrate that religion remained a central element of political culture after 1660.⁸¹⁷

Our purpose here has a different, a religious emphasis: it seeks to establish, from the related documents, why it was that the Bartholomeans considered it imperative, at great personal cost, that they should suffer ejection from the Church. What were the issues of conscience that made them refuse to conform; in short, what were the ideological motivations that caused them either to be driven from, or to exclude themselves from,

⁸¹³ Appleby, *Bartholomean's Day*, p.13

⁸¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.5

⁸¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.7, citing, Cragg, *Puritanism*, pp.10-11, and Finlayson, *Historians*, pp.7-8

⁸¹⁶ Appleby, *Bartholomean's Day*, pp.7-8

⁸¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.9-10

fellowship and communion with Christians — including fellow Puritans — who remained in the national Church?

Appleby, in questioning Cragg's and Finlayson's analyses, is at pains to stress the enormous significance of St. Bartholomew's Day, 1662, and certainly for those who were about to be ejected the consequences were momentous. For the Christian Church in England the consequences were also immense, for August 24, 1662 saw a rift in the Church of such magnitude that the divisive consequences are still with us, a partition that is now to be found throughout the world, spawning, as it has, a plethora of new Protestant denominations.

Appleby directs our attention to the Case sermon, and another preached by Thomas Lye [Leigh] (1621-1684) who, since 1658, had been minister at All Hallows Lombard Street in the City of London.⁸¹⁸ He was also a Nonconformist for the sake of conscience who had to face the serious consequences imposed on his family by the decision he had made. He preached two sermons on August 17, and in the morning he told his congregation:

Beloved, I prefer my wife and children before a blast of air of peoples talk: I am very sensible what it is to be reduced to a morsel of bread: Let the God of heaven and earth do what he will with me, if I could have subscribed with a good conscience, I would, I would do any thing to keep my self in the work of God, but to sin against my God, I dare not do it.⁸¹⁹

Lye's morning and afternoon discourses, which also appear in Calamy's collection, were separately published, in amended form, also in 1662.⁸²⁰ The editor of the latter version — the author of the 'Preface to the Reader' — is anonymous, and we cannot tell which is the precise record of the preached sermons, if either of them. In both accounts they read as quintessential expressions of Puritan spirituality in which Lye articulated his concern for the duty of the pastor towards the people, his flock. If he loved them, as a pastor should, how could he think of leaving them? 'Yes my beloved, we are so to love our people, as to venture any thing for them', but not at the cost of 'our own damnation'.⁸²¹ Taking as his text, Philippians 4: 1, he urged his hearers to stand fast in the Lord. Be 'humble Christians, that's the way to be standing steady ... if ever you would be steady in your stations, you must be low in your own eyes: do not you go and judge'.

This was not the first time that Lye had faced ejection from the Church. Having refused in 1651 to subscribe to the Oath of Engagement, a requirement imposed on him following

⁸¹⁸ Porter, 'Lye'

⁸¹⁹ Lye, 'Forenoon Sermon', p.335

⁸²⁰ Lye, *Fixed Saint*

⁸²¹ Lye, 'Forenoon Sermon', p.335

a dispute with the notorious Somerset JP, John Pyne (*bap.* 1600, *d.* 1678),⁸²² he had endured expulsion from his parish at Chard, and debarment from preaching in the county. 'I was banished, because I would not swear against my King, having sworn to maintain his just Power, Honour and Greatness'.⁸²³ As a result he preached his first farewell sermon to his Somerset congregation eleven years previously, coincidentally on St. Bartholomew's day of that year. Now he was enduring 'a second tryal' and, God assisting him, he would speak, 'if my passion will give me leave, just as if I would speak if I were immediately to die'. For Lye the reason for his ejection was clear. The sentence having gone out against him, a requirement to subscribe to that which his conscience would not allow, he had no alternative. In both situations Lye had to submit to his convictions. He acknowledged that the issues in contest were not essential to faith. 'I lay not the stress of my Salvation upon these: tis true, I cannot in conscience conform, but I do not lay the stress of salvation on it as I did not lay the stress of my salvation on my being a Presbyterian'. Nor did Lye insist that he was in the right and all others in error:

I come not here to throw firebrands. I bless God I have a most tender affection for all my Brethren in the Ministry; ... I condemn no man, I believe there be many of them do as conscientiously subscribe, as deny to subscribe.⁸²⁴

Though they differed, it was incumbent upon both those who were prepared to conform, and those who could not, to subscribe above all to their conscience: to maintain their integrity. For Lye the ultimate test had to be his response to the voice of his conscience. To deny that voice was to sin; to preserve integrity he must do nothing against his principles. Preaching in the afternoon he declared, 'I should sin, and break my peace, and conscience, and all, and never see good day'.⁸²⁵ In his doctrine Lye stood in the centre of the Reformed tradition, arguing that to stand fast the believer must beware all doctrines that were 'shaking', of which there were a great many. Amongst these he identified

all doctrines that tend to, and preach up licentiousness, loosness, and prophaneness, ... any doctrine that shall tend to the lifting up of mans free-will, and debasing of Gods free grace, ... tis a wicked doctrine, ... [and] as you would avoid Hell, avoid all those Doctrines that would lift up self-righteousness, and debase the righteousness of Christ.⁸²⁶

In his refusal to conform there was no dogmatic claim that he was in the right: 'may be I have not so much light as another man; and I profess in the presence of God, could I

⁸²² Underdown, 'Pyne'

⁸²³ Lye, 'Forenoon Sermon', p.329

⁸²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.335

⁸²⁵ Lye, 'Afternoon Sermon', p.352

⁸²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.357-358

conform without sin to my own, I would'.⁸²⁷ So he called on his hearers not to expend their zeal on censuring others when we would be better employed examining ourselves.⁸²⁸ Nor do we find him calling upon his flock to leave the Church to form a separate assembly, and in this he followed the example of fellow Bartholomeans. Lye had no intention of setting up a Separatist Church.

Appleby's interest in these sermons focuses on the political tensions experienced by the Bartholomeans, given their sufferings at the hands of an uncompromising authority. Whilst he notes that many of their prayers 'lavish considerable attention on the royal family,' their problem was how they might demonstrate their political loyalty in the face of their nonconformity.⁸²⁹ The editor of a second collection of sermons — which are accredited to Lazarus Seaman (d. 1675), the ejected minister of All Hallows, Bread Street — asserts, in his preface, that there is no evidence of an intention to rebel or subvert authority to be found in the sermons. 'Here lurks no Snake under these Herbs, no poisonous Serpent, under these fragrant Flowers, no root of errour, no slip of Schisme, no fruit of disobedience, whatever some men may prejudge, concerning them'.⁸³⁰ Appleby is not convinced. Whilst acknowledging Case to have been a leading advocate of the Restoration, Appleby quotes from his sermon to demonstrate, in his view, a 'scathing criticism of contemporary society':⁸³¹

Religion never suffered the like, as it hath done these latter dayes, by the pride and hypocrisie of some Pretenders to it; Gods name hath been thereby blasphemed by an evill and hypocritical generation; the people of God have lien under the greatest reproaches and contempts that ever any did under the heavens.⁸³²

However, it is not at all clear from the context that Case's censure was in fact directed either against society's oppression and those in authority, nor against the religious opponents who were causing his distress. The 'people of God' to which he referred, those who were suffering these bitter reproaches, were the 'dying churches of Jesus Christ ... [in] Germany, Lithuania, [and] Piedmont'. The blame for this, 'God may justly lay ... to our charge'. It was a 'want of fellow-feeling with our Brethren in their afflictions, it is a kind of Persecution, a kind of being accessary to their Sufferings'. It is against such 'pride and hypocrisie' that Case's criticism was levelled, and he included himself in his disapproval. It

⁸²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.351-352

⁸²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.352

⁸²⁹ Appleby, *Bartholomew's Day*, pp.24-25

⁸³⁰ [Seaman], *Second Collection*, Preface to the Reader, A3v

⁸³¹ Appleby, *Bartholomew's Day*, p.25

⁸³² Case, 'Sermon', p.101

was ‘our grievous unsensibleness of Gods Dishonour’ that was at fault.⁸³³ This is no condemnation of contemporary society.

Turning to Lye’s sermon, Appleby considers that Bartholomean expressions of loyalty became compromised by their sermons which, when published, as in Calamy’s collection, contained ‘much less guarded language’. He notes that Lye, in the midst of ‘repeated exhortations to stand fast, invited his listeners to “Come and set your feet upon the necks of these Kings” (Joshua 10.24)’, which is seen as an ‘insensitive reference to the public beheading of captured monarchs’. This he then coupled with Lye’s reference to Alexander the Great who, on reaching India, found himself ‘defied by holy men’, asserting that they cannot be made to change their minds by all his powers. These references are taken, by Appleby, to be public warnings to Charles II.⁸³⁴ The possibility that they are nothing other than typical Puritan biblically illustrated exhortations directed only at his hearers and readers is not considered by Appleby. It can only be an assumption in the Joshua citation that the five captured kings were beheaded: Joshua slew them, but we are not told how. Certainly Lye is calling upon his hearers to stand firm, for Christ died that they might live and conquer. But the battle is not of this world, it is spiritual. Christ’s fight with all ‘the wrath the Devils could inflict’ was for this end, ‘to make you steady, to give you the conquest of all spiritual Enemies, and to make you stand in that conquest triumphing’: it is typical Puritan rhetoric, exhorting the faithful to engage in spiritual warfare of the soul. Lye wished his congregation to understand that ‘the same spirit that was with Christ in all his Agonies, this very spirit he hath given to believers that he might bring them through with some victory’. That some of Lye’s comments might be considered lacking in discretion is acknowledged, but it does not take much to convince us that there was no intention of issuing anything by way of threats to royal authority in this sermon. We recall that Lye gave considerable evidence of his royalist sympathies. He had already undergone one ejection for his allegiance to Charles’s father, and he insisted that he had no desire to participate in any plan to subvert authority. ‘I am utterly against all irregular waies. I ... bless the Lord, never had a hand in any change of Government in all my life: I am for prayers, ears, quietness, submission, and meekness, and let God do his work, and thi[ngs] will be the best done when he doth it’.⁸³⁵

Appleby notes that there was a widespread desire among the ejected ministers to remain within the established Church, which wasn’t to say that they failed to express their

⁸³³ *Ibid.*, pp.100-101

⁸³⁴ Appleby, *Bartholomew’s Day*, pp.26-27

⁸³⁵ Lye, ‘Afternoon Sermon’, p.344, and p.349

disapproval of bishops and the Church they had left. For this reason, he maintains, their critical comments were ‘routinely encoded’, as when Lye condemned the Jewish Scribes and Pharisees as hypocrites,⁸³⁶ which Appleby sees as a veiled criticism of the prelates. I am not persuaded by this reading: what could be the advantage of any covert form of censure? The preacher’s true intention would have been as readily apparent to the religious hierarchy as to his listeners. Appleby claims that, in response to open rebuke by Anglicans, Bartholomeans alluded to their critics as ‘crypto-papists, Arminians, misguided dupes or worldly hypocrites’.⁸³⁷ In the farewell sermons themselves, such disparagements are, frankly, difficult to locate. In the Calamy collection, the few references to Papists are overwhelmingly directed just at Roman Catholics themselves, their doctrines and practices. There is only one reference to Arminianism, and that by Lye, who counselled his hearers that ‘as you would avoid Hell’ avoid the doctrines of ‘those whom we call Pelagians, and their brood the Arminians’,⁸³⁸ though it is not clear that he was specifically identifying his Anglican critics.

Appleby draws our attention to the forceful sermons of Joseph Cooper, but, again, it is difficult to find in his discourses any example of political intent, covert or otherwise. *The Dead Witnesse* was published in 1663, the only edition of a book written by a preacher about whom we know very little. A copy of this rare work is held in the Congregational Library, in London, now administered by Dr. Williams’s Library. The book, comprising eight sermons which are undated, was published in just over 300 pages, and Cooper tells us, in the title, that they were ‘lately Preached by way of Farewel to a Country-Auditory’, presumably his country parish. The sermons are strident in their Puritan rhetoric, inveighing against godlessness and sin, advocating submission to the holy will of God, with a call to repentance, devotion to godly worship and purity of life. But, whilst in ‘Sermon II’ he did call on his hearers to endure suffering, again we find no direct reference to his ejection, or complaint against his persecutors. His biblical text, in ‘Sermon V’, would appear to afford him every opportunity to prophesy divine judgement on society’s oppression: ‘And thou Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to Hell’.⁸³⁹ This sermon, however, is directed not against those in power, but against the privileged hearers of the Gospel, those who yet refused to repent: ‘all your Gospel-priviledges can avail you nothing, if you bring not forth fruit worthy of Repentence, and

⁸³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.337

⁸³⁷ Appleby, *Bartholomew’s Day*, p.33

⁸³⁸ Lye, ‘Afternoon Sermon’, pp.357-358

⁸³⁹ Cooper, *Dead Witnesse*, p.156, Matthew 11: 23

amendment of life'.⁸⁴⁰ Cooper applied the threat of divine wrath against those in the pews: 'There is no greater matter of reproach, unto any people, that under the means of Grace, to continue barren and unreformed'. 'All such as continue barren and unfruitful under the means of Grace, are in a most dangerous and sad condition'.⁸⁴¹ The only apparent reference to his own suffering is to be found on the title page, and even there the condemnation was directed against himself, when he quoted the prophet Micah: 'I will bear the indignation of the LORD, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me'.⁸⁴²

The farewell sermons are, for the most part, as recorded, meticulous examples of Puritan hermeneutic: thoroughgoing biblical exhortations and heartfelt entreaties for steadfastness and godliness. Remarkably little reference is made to the dramatic circumstances that were being experienced. Explicit complaints at the nature of the persecution the preachers were suffering are significantly few and references to the specific issues that had caused their refusal to conform are disappointingly rare. Their stance was a matter of integrity. The choice was whether to submit to binding subscriptions against their conscience and be damned, or to hold firm to their principles against all opposition and be free. The law now established allowed them only two options, either to deny their principles or to submit to ejection.

Certainly, not all Puritan rhetoric was given to conciliatory expressions of their scruples. Samuel Sclater [Slater] (1629?-1704), lecturer at Bury St. Edmunds since 1654, was ejected by the corporation for nonconformity two years after the Restoration.⁸⁴³ When it came to toleration of dogma which he regarded as false, he was a Bartholomean forthright in his rejection; there could be no compromise. In a sermon preached at Bury on October 13, 1658, on a day of solemn fasting and humiliation seeking a blessing upon Lord Protector, Richard Cromwell, he had declared himself wholly opposed to the toleration of error:

Many men cannot endure that a tittle should be spoken against a toleration, it is their darling, and the winde must not blow upon it, under the beautiful pretext of Christian liberty. Many plead for a lawless licentiousness of preaching, printing, professing what every one pleaseth.⁸⁴⁴

Sclater, expressing views directly opposed to Milton's advocacy of freedom of expression, declared his vehement opposition even to access to heretical publications openly granted to

⁸⁴⁰ Cooper, *Dead Witness*, p.173

⁸⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp.182 and 159

⁸⁴² *Ibid.*, Title page, Micah 7: 9

⁸⁴³ Benedict, 'Slater'

⁸⁴⁴ Slater, *Protector's Protection*, p.29

the gullible. 'The Press is glutted, and stomach sick, and spues out of its mouth books and pamphlets, stuff with dangerous doctrines, and damnable heresies, and it is sad to see how greedily poor ignorant and seduced souls lick up the vomit'.⁸⁴⁵ Yet in spite of his trenchant dogmatism, Sclater was nevertheless willing to submit himself passively to the terms of the Uniformity Act requiring his ejection. He told his congregation of the choice that faced him:

I suppose you all know there is an Act come forth by Supream Authority; and it is not for us to quarrel at all, but to submit to it, and hold correspondency with it, so far as we can with a good Conscience; and there being many Injunctions that many, besides myself, cannot comply withall, therefore we are willing to submit to the penalty inflicted.⁸⁴⁶

Compliant as Sclater was to lawful authority, his persuasions required rejection of any compromise on doctrine: dogma had become, for him, a divisive issue.

For many Bartholomeans the choice was far from straightforward. Ejection would render them incapable of fulfilling their calling and would mean an apparent desertion of the people they cared for and loved. What would happen to the faithful once they had gone? The printed version of two sermons, preached on August 17, 1662 by Richard Alleine (1610/11-1681), rector at Batcombe, near Shepton Mallet in Somerset since 1642, were brought together in a single book, 175 pages long. The first 170 are taken up with Alleine's encouragement to his listeners to endure their sufferings, for the more they abound in their suffering the greater will be the reward.⁸⁴⁷ Let them never deny their God by allowing themselves to be corrupted, either by evil men or Satan. The honour of God's truth and faithfulness was at stake. The faithful would 'suffer for Righteousness sake, they shall love Conscience, and their Integrity,' though it cost them dear.⁸⁴⁸ Yet again we search in vain in Alleine's sermons for specific complaints against the present causes of his distress. This research has found no mention of the Uniformity Act, of royal or parliamentary impositions, of complaints against the requirement to conform or of his forthcoming ejection. But, together with his stance for purity of doctrine Alleine, along with Case, was appalled by the divisions manifest among Christians. It was not for Christians to encourage party division for true believers were to be found in many forms. 'As we are Christs, so they are Christs'. We should have more to show for our Christianity than to be called 'Presbyterians, Independents, Anabaptists, Episcopal, or Erastians'.⁸⁴⁹

⁸⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p.28

⁸⁴⁶ Sclater, 'Farewell Sermon', p.135

⁸⁴⁷ Alleine, *Godly Mans Portion*, p.35

⁸⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p.34

⁸⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p.140

Let all parties that are named of Christ, be humbled [by our] former Divisions. What Peace so long as God is angry? Oh how have we provoked the Lord, by provoking one another! Let him only who hath been without sin in this matter, be without sorrow and shame.⁸⁵⁰

Standing with those who advocated the toleration of those with whom they differed, he insisted that we should never seek to impose our beliefs upon the consciences of others:

In matters circumstantial, be not over-hasty in stamping a *Jus Divinum* on Things disputable and doubtful: Put no more weight, nor a greater necessity, on anything, than God hath evidently put on it; ... Allow for the imperfect state the Church is in, we know but in part; and till that which is perfect is come, and that which is imperfect is done away, we must bear with one another, if in any things we be otherwise minded. Stretch not your Authority beyond your Line, take not too much upon you: Think not to bring all others, in everything, to your Standard; impose not your Consciences, as a Law upon others.⁸⁵¹

Yet, despite these high and admirable ideals, Alleine refused to subscribe and was ejected. When others attempted to impose their standards upon him, his scruples would not allow him to submit.

Not all the Bartholomeans supported Alleine in this plea for toleration. As Appleby points out, John Barrett (1631-1713), who was ejected from his position as rector of St. Peter's, Nottingham, was like Sclater among those who insisted on purity of doctrine at all costs. Preaching from I Kings 18: 21 with the words, 'How long halt ye between two opinions', he declared that 'it is not a thing indifferent, whether they are for god, or Baal'. It is a pernicious opinion, he argued, to say that 'you may be saved in any Religion'.⁸⁵² But Barrett's polemic was not necessarily in opposition to other denominational traditions, but rather against deviations such as Arianism, in which case the deity of Christ, he considered, is the touchstone. Arminianism, where free-grace 'becomes a main note of discovery', and the 'absurd Opinion of Christ's real, corporal presence in the Sacrament'; these Barratt also considered issues at stake. On these points, 'if men be not clear, and steadfast in, ... they will easily be led away with the error of the Wicked'.⁸⁵³

This address, whilst it is included in an anonymously edited collection of farewell sermons, was not the last Barratt preached before his ejection. Included in the same collection is another, which he himself identified as his last. At the end of this lengthy discourse — in which he besought his hearers to 'suffer the word of Exhortation, ... for there is no work ... so necessary as this, to work out your Salvation. ... Leave this undone, and you are undone forever',⁸⁵⁴ — he proceeds, in a mere ten line paragraph of print, to

⁸⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p.138

⁸⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p.140

⁸⁵² Barrett, 'Sermon IV', p.67

⁸⁵³ *Ibid.*, p.74

⁸⁵⁴ Barrett, 'Sermon III', p.57

address expectations to 'speak something touching my Deprivation'. In answer to accusations that 'we willingly bring this Obscurity on our selves', he answers, 'it was ... Conscience that would not suffer us to comply with the things now imposed. ... we dare not adventure on checks, reproaches, smittings of our own hearts and consciences; though it follow, that our mouths be stopped'.⁸⁵⁵ All that is then left for him is to thank his hearers for the respect shown to him, and for their prayers. Once again, the absence of any bitterness or reproach is striking, coming from a preacher prone to strident attacks against perceived heresy. It was not rebellion against authority that motivated Barrett. Where temporal authority required him to disobey God, he refused: in all other respects he acknowledged its right to rule. In so doing he met his obligations to 'render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's'.⁸⁵⁶

Not the whole corpus of Bartholomean farewell sermons has been exhaustively read for the purpose of this thesis: this remains an on-going task. But the noteworthy absence of revolt, any sense of grievance or protest, is a factor very apparent in the discourses reviewed above. Unless Appleby's assertion that the Bartholomeans expressed their criticism in coded form is accepted, then there can only be two reasons for this. Either the published versions are indeed a fair record of the sermons preached, reflecting accurately a genuinely submissive impetus in the Puritan response, or the discourses have been reworked in order to give an impression of passive acceptance of authority. We are faced with the difficulty, as Hunt has observed, that '...in some cases even the very words of the sermon ... are not always accurately reported in printed editions, [and] remain largely or wholly irrecoverable'. 'English historians ... are ... coming to realise that [for a number of reasons] printed sermons are not always a reliable guide to what was spoken from the pulpit'.⁸⁵⁷ The explanation probably includes, I suggest, a combination of the two. In the summer of 1662 these ejected clergymen may well have hoped, even anticipated that some form of accommodation might yet be found to enable them to return to the fold. Published expressions of revolt would not have furthered that cause, especially given the powers granted to the Stationer's Company by the 1662 Licencing Act to confiscate any book suspected of containing matters hostile to the Church or Government.

Repeatedly then, we find that both for the Bartholomeans and for those who did subscribe, it was 'conscience' that was the bar at which the actions of the Christian had to be tried. Samuel Annesley (1620?-1696), the ejected minister of St. Giles Cripplegate,

⁸⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p.65

⁸⁵⁶ Matthew 22: 21

⁸⁵⁷ Hunt, *Hearing*, pp.8-9, and p.147

defined the individual's 'conscience', as 'man's judgement of himself ... of his [spiritual] Estate and Actions, as they are subjected to the Judgements of God'.⁸⁵⁸ Conscience, he maintained, is variously depicted in the Bible as a man's heart, or his spirit: 'keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life' (Proverbs 4:23), and, 'for what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?'⁸⁵⁹ The maintenance of a 'good conscience' was seen as an imperative; to deny these demands was to expose the soul to eternal retribution. Just how the Bartholomeans were able to retain their integrity in response to imposed legislation we shall be examining in Chapter 8,⁸⁶⁰ but this preservation of principle as the individual's direct responsibility to God was, I suggest, not only an admirable feature of both Puritan and Conformist polemic. It was also, by its very insistence on adherence to their particular rigid doctrinal convention, establishing itself against opposing and equally unbending demands to conform in doctrine and practice. Both sides were setting in concrete their own theological positions in the perceived interest of logical consistency, this at the expense of both Church unity and their pastoral calling. It was, and it remains, a prime, if not the principal cause of division among Christian believers.

This brings to a conclusion our examination of religious diversity in the middle of the seventeenth century, upon which expanded observations will appear in Chapter 9. We must now, as a comparative exercise, turn to the later years of the sixteenth century in order that we might consider why the outcome of religious disputation then was very different.

⁸⁵⁸ Annesley, 'Exactly conscientious', p.3. Annesley's daughter, Susanna, was John and Charles Wesley's mother.

⁸⁵⁹ 1 Corinthians 2: 11

⁸⁶⁰ See below, pp.288-289

Chapter 6

The Sixteenth-Century Church and the Admonition Controversy

Admonitions are not to be counted accusations.

Thomas Manton (1677)⁸⁶¹

We return now to the Church in England in the second half of the sixteenth century. In Chapter 1, we explored the extensive contributions from historians to our understanding of the Church in England during the later decades of that century, observing that whilst not all agree as to its nature, the consensual view is that the English Church by the turn of the century had arrived at an accord in doctrine and practice sufficient to obviate any major split. In this chapter and Chapter 7, we shall examine evidence from this era in order to establish to what extent the controversies of the period, and the activities of a number of the participants are consistent with this interpretation. How was it that those who did engage in controversy were able to achieve this consensus? Given that religious disputes abounded, why was it that ejections, and separation for conscience sake, by comparison with 1662, were relatively rare?

Much religious contention in the sixteenth century centred on the Church's service book, *The Book of Common Prayer*, and the various requirements to conform to its doctrine and ceremonies. On January 22, 1548/9 King Edward VI's Parliament passed an Act of Uniformity which introduced a single, uniform service book in English for the use of the English Church. In character this 1549 Prayer Book was not particularly radical, but it did provide, in the vernacular, a unified form of service in a single volume for use throughout the realm. The intention was to simplify the services, to order the usage of Psalms, and to provide for Lessons that would cover virtually the whole of the Bible.⁸⁶² The Book might be considered little more than a revision of the old Sarum service books, but it was not long before this new service book gave rise to contention. Edward C. Ratcliffe records that the Communion Service is 'distinctly reminiscent of the ... Mass', which rendered it for the reforming Bishop John Hooper (Bishop of Gloucester 1551-54, also Bishop of Worcester 1552-54),⁸⁶³ 'very defective ... and ... manifestly impious'.⁸⁶⁴ Hooper, initiating

⁸⁶¹ Manton, *Last Sayings*, No.31

⁸⁶² Frere, *New History*, p.52

⁸⁶³ Hooper was deprived of the Bishopric of Worcester in 1554 because Nicholas Heath had been wrongly deprived before him. He was deprived of the Bishopric of Gloucester in the same year because he was married. He was burnt for heresy on February 9, 1554/5. Le Neve, *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae*, p.40

controversies over the use of vestments, rejected them, insisting that they had no sanction from Scripture, nor was their use a thing indifferent. In so arguing he exposed a difference with fellow reformer, the Bishop of London, Nicholas Ridley (1502-1555) when, initially, Hooper refused to be consecrated to the Bishopric of Gloucester wearing episcopal apparel. They were considered by him to be open to superstition and idolatry and, because they symbolized Roman Catholicism, they misled the people.⁸⁶⁵ At the opposite extreme, as Edward C. Ratcliffe records, the conservative Bishop Stephen Gardiner (Bishop of Winchester, 1531-51 and 1553-55) regarded the 1549 Communion service as ‘not distant from Catholic Faith’,⁸⁶⁶ but, even so, it proved too much of a departure from old usage for the Catholic Princess Mary, who banned it from her chapel.⁸⁶⁷

The second, more radical, Edwardine Prayer Book appeared in 1552. In it all vesture is reduced to a rochet for bishops and a surplice for other ministers. Traditional vestments are forbidden and the altar becomes a table. All reference to the Mass is removed, there is no blessing or consecration of the elements, no notion of sacrifice is included, and the communicants are invited to receive the elements as an act of remembrance, and to ‘feed on [Christ] in [their] heart by faith’. The doctrine of transubstantiation is specifically denied and the bread, which is received by the communicant into the hand rather than the mouth, is to be ‘the best and purest wheat bread, that conveniently may be gotten’. Any bread and wine remaining was to be given to the curate for his own private consumption. Within months of publication, the Black Rubric was attached, establishing that the act of kneeling to receive Communion implied no adoration either of the Sacrament or any belief in any real presence of Christ’s flesh and blood. That 1552 book was abolished early in Queen Mary’s reign a year later. Elizabeth did not identically restore it on her succession: the service book that was adopted by the Act of Uniformity of May 1559 was part of a compromise in which — Roger Bowers argues — the Queen exacted concessions in an attempt to ‘claw back’ lost ground in agreeing to the adoption of the second Edwardian service book rather than the first. ‘Ground was won back for the conservatives by specific provisions of the Act of Uniformity, particular rubrics in the Prayer Book of 1559, and certain clauses of the Injunctions of 1559’.⁸⁶⁸ Changes to the 1552 Book included: the provision of an additional table of lessons for Sundays, the exclusion of the Black Rubric, and the alteration of the Litany to exclude offensive reference to the Pope. Kneeling at

⁸⁶⁴ Ratcliffe, *Common Prayer*, p.14

⁸⁶⁵ McGinn, *Admonition Controversy*, p.7, and Wabuda, ‘Ridley’

⁸⁶⁶ Ratcliffe, *Common Prayer*, p.15

⁸⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p.14

⁸⁶⁸ Bowers, ‘Chapel Royal’, pp.321 and 339

Communion was made obligatory and the 1552 wording at the administration of the elements was preceded by that of 1549.⁸⁶⁹ Thus for the wine the wording became:

The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life: and drink this in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for thee, and be thankful.

An 'ornaments clause', located near the end of the Act of Uniformity, specified that until the Queen made other orders, ornaments in the chancel of the church, and vestments worn by the minister, were to remain as those sanctioned in the second year of the reign of Edward VI.⁸⁷⁰ Further concessions were required by the 1559 Royal Injunctions that immediately followed. These included provision for ministers to 'wear such seemly habits, garments, and such square caps as were most commonly and orderly received in the latter year of the reign of King Edward VI, not thereby meaning to attribute any holiness ... to the said garments'.⁸⁷¹ Widespread confusion of interpretation resulted, together with uncertainty about the extent of the obligation to conform, and in an attempt to provide clarity the bishops and archbishops issued their own interpretations and resolutions in 1561. These required the use of the surplice by all ministers in church and the cope in the administration of the Lord's Supper.⁸⁷² This effort failed to achieve universal conformity and in response to Elizabeth's demands for uniformity, Archbishop Parker and the ecclesiastical commissioners, in 1566, issued the *Advertisements*, without the Queen's signature, requiring uniformity in ecclesiastical apparel. The *Advertisements* and the obligatory subscription revived the Edwardian 'Vestiarian Controversy', and fuelled the Puritan and Conformist controversies that followed.

Arnold Hunt contends that unease over the Prayer Book and the requirement to conform to set ceremonies and clerical attire was manifesting itself as early as the 1560s, instigating divisions between those in ministry at this early stage, that is between those readily willing to conform — moderate Puritans who, for the sake of their ministry, conformed with reservations — and the radicals amongst the 'godly brethren' who considered the prescribed forms to be a denial of the teachings of Scripture. Hunt suggests that 'the stability of the Elizabethan settlement depended on the ability of moderate Puritans to persuade their radical brethren to remain in communion ... rather than lapse into separatism'.⁸⁷³ This involved, for moderate Puritans such as Laurence Chaderton

⁸⁶⁹ McGinn, *Admonition Controversy*, p.13

⁸⁷⁰ Bowers, 'Chapel Royal', p.339

⁸⁷¹ *Announcing Injunctions for Religion* (1559), reprinted in Hughes and Larkin, *Tudor Proclamations*, p.126

⁸⁷² Kennedy, 'Interpretations', pp.15-17

⁸⁷³ Hunt, 'Chaderton', p.207

(1536?-1640), calling for concessions to be granted to tender consciences whilst arguing that Christian liberty should allow the clergy the conscientious freedom to wear the surplice or not, dependent upon circumstances imposed by law and the custom of the Church. Conformists insisted that whilst things indifferent might not have been instituted by Christ and by Scripture neither are they forbidden. The radicals might insist that the preaching of the Word was of greater importance than the wearing of the surplice but, by the same token, ministers should not allow a refusal to wear the surplice to prevent their greater obligation to preach the Gospel.⁸⁷⁴ But then, was the Puritan retort, if things indifferent are not to be forbidden then neither should they be required as a condition of ministry.

By the 1570s the Puritan reservations and objections were crystallising into formulae and action, and it is one particular radical Puritan onslaught against these attempts at uniformity, and the defense of them by Conformist polemicists, that we now address.

The Admonition Crisis

The study of the rise of Puritan influences and opinions within the English Established Church in the second half of the sixteenth century cannot avoid addressing the ‘Admonition Controversy’ and the contest of words and ideas — into which it evolved — that took place, during the 1570s, between Cartwright and Whitgift.⁸⁷⁵ This debate between one of the leading advocates of Presbyterianism and the Conformist — later, in 1583, to become Archbishop of Canterbury — was lengthy, it was wordy, and at times contentious. For both sides the issues under discussion were considered to be of immense importance. Both the future of the Church and the progress of true religion were considered to be at stake. But, what was really at the heart of this debate between the two one-time Cambridge intellectuals? What were the underlying convictions that gave impetus to their arguments?

By 1572, the year of publication of *An Admonition to the Parliament*, the Puritan impetus, fuelled by the return of the Marian exiles after the accession of Elizabeth I in 1558, had reached a peak of intensity. Looking for a Reformed Church after continental models and frustrated by the Church’s retention of its Catholic structure of bishops, cathedrals, and ecclesiastical courts,⁸⁷⁶ the Puritan reformers were increasingly aggravated by what they perceived as the arbitrary intervention by Elizabeth, as Supreme Governor of the Church, in the process of further reform of order and worship. Two London progressives, Field

⁸⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p.214

⁸⁷⁵ Tanner, *Admonition Controversy*. Work that follows here cites, and is a development of, my Master’s degree dissertation in the History of Christianity, King’s College London, 2002.

⁸⁷⁶ Fincham, ‘Introduction’, p.2

and Wilcox, published the *Admonition* anonymously, a pamphlet which, though ostensibly intended for Parliament, was widely circulated. It caused considerable uproar and a rebuttal, the *Answer* (1572), which was prepared and published by Whitgift at the request of Archbishop Parker. The authors of the *Admonition* were identified and imprisoned for a year and their pamphlet proscribed. Cartwright entered the fray in defence of the Puritan position and was probably the author of the anonymous *Second Admonition* (1572).⁸⁷⁷ He was certainly the author of a number of lengthy treatises written in response to Whitgift's arguments, and the two engaged in a written debate that lasted for several years, a dispute that we shall examine in more detail in the next chapter.

The casual observer might be forgiven for concluding that, at times, the dispute descended into trifling squabbles over detail. What, in reality, could be the relevance of lengthy arguments about clerical attire, the use of formal prayers, introits, readings from the Epistles and Gospels, and the reciting of the Nicene Creed, or the use of wedding rings and the observance of holy days? How could the future of the Church possibly be affected by whether the word 'priest' is used in the service book, or by the position in the church from which a clergyman chose to conduct services?

That there were deeper issues involved becomes apparent on closer examination. Standard perceptions of the controversy include the view that the debate was essentially about the structure of the Church and the nature of its government and discipline, 'Calvinist forms against Episcopalian uses',⁸⁷⁸ exacerbated by intolerance. Strong arguments can be made for the analysis that the dispute was over concerns related to the extent of biblical authority, or about the nature and long-term effects of the Reformation, and of attitudes to the Church's own past.⁸⁷⁹ That there were deeper religious motivations at work behind the expressed concerns of the contestants is not immediately apparent. In drawing our conclusions about the arguments set out by the contestants we should be asking ourselves why those issues were of such importance. If the controversy was about Church polity then why was that subject of such great concern? Why was the authority of the Bible, or attitudes to the papacy, considered to be so significant? I maintain that opinions about Church order and biblical interpretation sprang from beliefs about the ultimate nature and purpose of the Church, the function of religion in society, and many of these

⁸⁷⁷ The assertion that Cartwright was the author of the *Second Admonition* is rejected by Scott Pearson: Scott Pearson, *Cartwright*, p.74, a view which Dawley considers 'entirely convincing': Dawley, *Whitgift*, p.94n. Frere, Douglas and McGinn take the alternative view. In this study, Cartwright's authorship will be accepted: Frere and Douglas, *Puritan Manifestoes*, p.xiv and McGinn, *Admonition Controversy*, p.52

⁸⁷⁸ New, *Anglican and Puritan*, p.32

⁸⁷⁹ Fincham, 'Introduction', pp.1-2

concerns manifested themselves in attitudes expressed with particular reference to the Elizabethan Book of Common Prayer.

After all, the contestants and those they represented held much in common. The major doctrines of the Reformation were endorsed by both sides. Their views on mankind's condition, our sin and rebellion and total depravity following the Fall, our destiny as rebels under judgement — such dogma neither side would question. Their shared views as to the hopes for mankind in Jesus Christ, salvation, justification by faith, the sovereignty and mercy of God, free grace, election, and eternal bliss for the elect, these all sprang from their common acknowledgement of the authority of Scripture in matters of faith and salvation. What then could possibly divide them given such potent unanimity of belief? For divided they were: as New maintains, the

variations within the broad framework ... gave rise to behaviour patterns that at times became diametrically opposed. Even small distinctions aroused antagonism because the subtleties were meaningful to those who lived and felt them.⁸⁸⁰

Issues that might appear to us as small distinctions were not insignificant to the authors of the *Admonition*, nor to Whitgift and Cartwright. There is more in the disputes than meets the eye, and to aver that here were intelligent men arguing over trivia would be to misjudge their motivation. For them, religion was the driving force in life. Nothing was of greater significance, and it is the purpose of this study to analyse the essential stimuli that motivated them, and to establish the concerns that drove their responses towards both contention and unity.

The first printed edition of the *Admonition* which included a second treatise, *A View of popishe abuses*, and an Appendix comprising two letters, appeared in June, 1572. It was subsequently issued in an edition that included the *Second Admonition* in October of that year.⁸⁸¹ The texts appear in two seventeenth-century reprints⁸⁸² and in an early twentieth-century edition published in 1907 under the editorship of W.H. Frere and C.E. Douglas, an edition reprinted in 1954. The *Admonition* was first published anonymously, although the authorship is generally accepted as being Field and Wilcox. Field was ordained priest by Edmund Grindal (1519-1583) when Bishop of London in 1566, and the following year he became curate of St. Giles Cripplegate, in London. That church, together with Holy Trinity Minories where Wilcox was a preacher, was a flourishing centre for Puritan

⁸⁸⁰ New, *Anglican and Puritan*, p.6

⁸⁸¹ Frere and Douglas, *Puritan Manifestoes*, p.xiv

⁸⁸² 1617 [STC, 10849] and 1644 [Wing, F858B] The first includes the *Second Admonition*, the second does not.

Presbyterian — even semi-sectarian — activity in the 1570s.⁸⁸³ Field joined forces with Wilcox to produce a pamphlet that has been described as ‘the first open manifesto of the puritan party’.⁸⁸⁴ The authorship of the *Second Admonition* is widely attributed to Cartwright, but this view is contested by historians such as Scott Pearson and Dawley.⁸⁸⁵

The declared objective of the authors of the *Admonition* was the establishment of a Reformed Church ‘according to the prescript of Gods woorde’.⁸⁸⁶ They evince little sympathy for ceremonial worship or for episcopacy. The bishops office is considered to be devilish, antichristian, ‘strange & unhard of in Chrystes church, nay plainly in gods word forbidden’.⁸⁸⁷ Their concept of what constitutes legitimate Church order and ceremony required that the contents of the Prayer Book be justified by the precepts of Scripture, ‘that nothing be don in this or any other thing, but that which you have the expresse warrant of gods worde for’.⁸⁸⁸ Everything in it without biblical sanction must be rejected or reformed, regardless of the evident sanctity and good order it might be said to provide. They complained of the constraints of the Prayer Book which require that ministers be ‘bound ... to a prescript order of service ... in which [are] a great number of things contrary to God’s word’.⁸⁸⁹ It was asserted that unless these abuses were removed, ‘Gods church in this realme shall never be builded’.⁸⁹⁰ The singing of an Introit was a practice unknown in the early Church, ‘for Celestinus a pope brought it in, aboute the yeare 430 ... we have borrowed [it] ... out of the masse booke,’ and the ‘surplesses [were] devised by Pope Adaien’.⁸⁹¹ In spite of their high regard for Scripture and doctrine the ‘Epistle’ and ‘Gospel’, and the reading of the Nicene Creed were rejected as popish introductions, as was the use of wafer cakes in the Eucharist, and the practice of kneeling to receive the elements.⁸⁹² The *View of popishe abuses* lists objections to ceremony associated with the service book, some twenty-one in all. These objections related to the reading of services, private sacraments, holy days devoted to saints, surplices and copes, homilies, the title of ‘priest’, the signing of the cross in baptism, standing for the Gospel, bell ringing, organ playing, accompanied by ‘curious singing’, and cathedrals.⁸⁹³ As for the Archbishops and

⁸⁸³ Collinson, ‘Field’, pp.338-339, and Collinson, ‘Wilcox’

⁸⁸⁴ Frere and Douglas, *Puritan Manifestoes*, p.vii

⁸⁸⁵ Above, p.200n

⁸⁸⁶ Field and Wilcox, *Admonition*, [p.5]

⁸⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, [pp.7 and 28]

⁸⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, [p.10]

⁸⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, [p.7]

⁸⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹¹ *Ibid.*, [p.9]

⁸⁹² *Ibid.*

⁸⁹³ *Ibid.*, [p.30]

their law courts, they are 'by statute of this realme yet unrepealed, ... the fylthy quauere mire, and poysoned plashe of all the abominations that doe infect the whole realme'.⁸⁹⁴

In the *Admonition*, couched amid the details of like confrontational and prescient polemic, we may yet identify the desire for a godly ministry exercised by 'lawfull pastors, ... watchfull Segnors and Elders, and carefull Deacons',⁸⁹⁵ in a Reformed Church not to be disfigured by superstition and ignorance, but rather directed towards regulating and edifying the people, the elect, as the house of God. Such a Church had three distinguishing characteristics:

The outward markes wherby a true christian church is knowne, are preaching of the woordes purely, ministring of the sacraments sincerely, and Ecclesiasticall discipline which consisteth in admonition and correction of faults seuerely.⁸⁹⁶

The underlying significance of Puritan views on Church order can be seen in the assertion that ecclesiastical discipline is a means 'whereby men learn to frame their willes and doings according to the law of God'.⁸⁹⁷ It was elect believers that were their prime concern. The New Testament practice of public discipline should be restored as 'very necessary and profytable for the building up of Gods house. The final end of this discipline, is the reframing of the disordered, & to bring them to repentance, and to bridle such as wold offend'.⁸⁹⁸ Should it become necessary, the offender proving obstinate, then the extreme stricture of excommunication should be imposed. The Puritan objective was a godly ministry through which a spiritual Church might be built and the kingdom of Christ established among the regenerate elect. Everything must be subject to that overriding resolve.

Cartwright's contribution in the *Second Admonition* is, in the view of Frere and Douglas, 'wearisome and unconvincing' and in 'direct contrast' to the *Admonition*. Cartwright's 'few fresh objections to the Prayer Book [are] of a more puerile type' they maintained, but the partiality of these editors to the Puritan stance can be discerned given their view that it is 'difficult now to believe that clergy of the Church of England can ever have seriously proposed ... to set up such a scheme'.⁸⁹⁹ Donald McGinn, by comparison, considers that the later tract demonstrates the author's complete understanding of the Presbyterian system.⁹⁰⁰ Certainly, by modern standards, his arguments are strongly expressed, given to

⁸⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, [p.31]

⁸⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, [p.32]

⁸⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, [p.5]

⁸⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, [p.12]

⁸⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹⁹ Frere and Douglas, *Puritan Manifestoes*, p.xxiii

⁹⁰⁰ McGinn, *Admonition Controversy*, p.52

vitriol and sarcasm. They demonstrate strong objections to any form of worship that is prescribed and ‘popish’ including set prayers: noble wording does not justify their repetition:

If ... there were never an ill worde, nor sentence in all the prayers, yet to appoint it to be used, or to use it as Papists did their mattens and evensong, for a set service to God, though the woordes be good, the use is naught.⁹⁰¹

The *Gloria Patri*, *Dominus vobiscum*, *Oremus*, the *Kyrie Eleison*, and *Pater noster* Cartwright considers to be ‘forbidden by our savioure: you when you pray use not vain repetitions as the heathen doe’.⁹⁰² Cartwright insisted that the abuse will remain until ‘there be a reformation of praier’.⁹⁰³ Superstitious forms of worship were repugnant to Cartwright. His *Second Admonition* demonstrates his powerful objection to any practice, form or structure that might deceive the elect, anything that detracts from edification of faithful and godly believers. Thus, in the prayers, the essential element is that ‘praying should touche the heart’.⁹⁰⁴

Not all those sympathetic to Puritan dissent were as supportive of the *Admonition* as Cartwright. Scott Wenig claims that the majority of the older leaders, including the progressive bishops, regarded the publication ‘as nothing short of disastrous to the original cause of fervent reform’.⁹⁰⁵ Edwin Sandys (1519?-1588), by now Bishop of London, wrote of supporters of the *Admonition*: ‘Selfe likinge hath intoxicated them, and the flatterie of the fantastickall people hath bewitched them. ... Such men must be restrained if the state shall be saffe’.⁹⁰⁶ As for peace-loving Hooker, his opinion of Cartwright was clearly expressed in his Preface to *Ecclesiastical Polity*. ‘Concerning the defender of which admonitions, all that I mean to say is but this: “There will come a time when three words uttered with charitie and meeknesse, shall receive a farre more blessed reward, then three thousand volumes written with disdainfull sharpnes of wit”’.⁹⁰⁷

To what extent, then, can it be said that the views of Field, Wilcox, and Cartwright, albeit trenchantly expressed, fairly represented the ambitions of evolving reformist opinion?

⁹⁰¹ [Cartwright], *Second Admonition*, p.38

⁹⁰² *Ibid.*, p.39

⁹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p.38

⁹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p.39

⁹⁰⁵ Wenig, *Altars*, p.121

⁹⁰⁶ Edwin Sandys, a letter to Lords Burghley and Leicester, August 5, 1573, cited by Frere and Douglas, *Puritan Manifestoes*, pp.xviii-xix

⁹⁰⁷ Hooker, *Ecclesiastical Polity*, p.10

Puritan Aspirations

In the *Admonition*, the radical Puritan reaction to the *Book of Common Prayer* and the established Church structure is largely stated in terms of their objections and their condemnation. It is a negative rather than a constructive response. We are left in no doubt about what radical Puritans thought unacceptable, even abominable. Is it possible, perhaps, to make a positive analysis of their aspirations from the service books and manuals on Church order that they produced as an alternative?

One such is the *Forme of Common Prayers*, a proposed Puritan substitute for the Prayer Book. It was derived from a book of prayers that was compiled, according to Strype, at Geneva under the oversight of Calvin for the use of the exiled English congregation in the 1550's. This Genevan service book, Strype asserted, was being used by Separatists in England as early as 1567.⁹⁰⁸ The *Forme of Common Prayers* itself was printed without date, but Frere maintained that the earliest known edition was printed in 1584, or certainly by early 1585, since it was prohibited by order of the Court of Star Chamber in June of that year.⁹⁰⁹ An altered edition was printed in 1586 on the Continent, in Middleburgh, where Cartwright was ministering to a company of English merchants.⁹¹⁰ Another amended edition was submitted to Parliament in 1586-87, but Elizabeth, 'for divers good causes best known to herself thought fit to suppress [the] same'.⁹¹¹ The intent of the book was the establishment of Reformed doctrine and the rejection of 'superstition'. Its aims subordinated the form of Church worship to the greater concern for edification. The book demonstrates the Puritan insistence that the Church's task is the establishment of godly faith and living among the elect, the maintenance of the power of the Word to transform the lives of genuine believers. All forms of worship not specifically commanded by Scripture were considered a superstition intended to delude and deceive, and the service book is designed accordingly.

The *Forme of Common Prayers* (1584/5) opens with a lengthy Confession of Faith, heavily annotated with proof texts, with the Apostles' Creed set in parallel in the margin. This declaration asserts that the duty of the godly ruler is the

reformation and defence of Christs Church ... against al idolaters and heritiks, as Papists, Anabaptists, family of Love, with such like members of Antichrist ... to root out al doctrin of devils and men, as the Masse, purgatory, *Limbus patrum*, praier to saints, and for the dead, free-will, superstitious distinction of meates, apparel, and dayes, vowes of single life,

⁹⁰⁸ Frere, *New History*, p.131, quoting John Strype, *The History of the Life of ... Edmund Grindal . . . Archbishop of Canterbury* (London, 1710) p.114

⁹⁰⁹ Frere, *New History*, p.132

⁹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹¹ Frere, *New History*, p.115, quoting D'Ewes, *Journals*, pp.339, and 410-412

presence at idol service, mans merits, with such like which draw us from the society of Christes Church.⁹¹²

The affirmation recognised two Sacraments, those of ‘Baptism and the Lord’s supper’, and neither was designated as a means of grace; rather, they were seen as ‘holy signes, and seales of Gods promises’.⁹¹³ The confession acknowledged one holy universal Church, with Christ as its only head. The membership of that Church is known only to God and is comprised of the elect.⁹¹⁴ The truly Reformed Church has ‘three tokens or marks, whereby it may be known’.⁹¹⁵ They are the Word of God, the two Sacraments, rightly administered, and a third, which is ‘Ecclesiasticall Discipline which standeth in Admonition, separation, excommunication, and the curse called *Anathama*, in some speciall cases’.⁹¹⁶ The standards required of pastors, doctors, elders, and deacons, and details of their election and ordination are prescribed, together with a requirement for a weekly assembly of ministers. There follows an order for weekly public interpretation of the Scriptures, prayers for the Church and State, including the Queen, a confessional prayer before the sermon, with no absolution. A psalm is sung, a passage of Scripture set by the minister is read and the sermon follows. Several lengthy prayers are provided which may be used after the sermon, but use of the set prayers is not stipulated. The minister has freedom to pray ‘as the Spirite of God shall moouue his heart’.⁹¹⁷ There is also provision for the reciting of the Apostles’ Creed and the Lord’s Prayer by the minister. The people sing another psalm, as the minister appoints, and, following a blessing, the congregation departs. There follows an order of service, with set prayers, for Baptism, the Lord’s Supper, and Marriage, and then instructions for the visitation of the sick, the burial of the dead, to be conducted without any ceremony, and the order for Church discipline.

A further model of Puritan religious ceremony, composed in Latin in the same year — but not published — is Travers’s *Disciplina Ecclesiae*. (An English translation of this work, entitled the *Directory of Church-government*, sometimes attributed to Cartwright, was published later in 1644). Yet another late example is the Westminster Assembly’s *Directory for ... Publique Worship*, which, although a compromise given the necessity for the Assembly to accommodate the Independents, also affords a useful illustration of the goals the Puritans were seeking to achieve. Sunday, the ‘Christian Sabbath’, must be given over to ‘solemn

⁹¹² *Forme of Common Prayers*, pp.11-12

⁹¹³ *Ibid.*, p.9

⁹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.8

⁹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.9

⁹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.10-11

⁹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.46

meetings of the Congregation in public' and to private devotions, prayer, and the reading of sermons.⁹¹⁸ Regular attendance at the church assembly was insisted upon at a service in which, with the exception of the singing of metrical psalms, the congregation plays no part.

The Holy Scriptures ... intimat[e] the people's part in public prayer to be only with silence and reverence to attend thereunto, and to declare their consent in the close, by saying *Amen*.⁹¹⁹

The Lord's Prayer, if it was said at all, was recited by the minister alone. There is a noticeable absence of those forms of worship prescribed in the *Book of Common Prayer* that were evidently designed for the praise and honour of God. There is no *Gloria Patri*, no *Te Deum laudamus* or *Benedicite*. There is no Preface or Proper Preface, no *Sanctus*, and no *Gloria in excelsis Deo* in either Latin or English. There is no provision for music other than the psalm and therefore, apparently, no choir or musical instruments. There is no reciting of the Creed, no responses, no changing Sunday Collects, no Church calendar, no Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, or Pentecost, and no saint's days. There is no signing with the cross at Baptism, no Confirmation of children, no kneeling at the reception of the Communion, no ring at marriage, and no prayers for the dead: 'let the dead body ... be ... interred, without any ceremony'.⁹²⁰ Regular serial readings from the Bible are prescribed, usually one chapter from each Testament and instructions for the content of the prayer before the sermon evidently require it to be long.⁹²¹ The emphasis is upon the sermon:

Preaching of the Word, being the power of God unto salvation, and one of the greatest and most excellent works belonging to the ministry of the Gospel, should be so performed, that the workman should not be ashamed, and may save himself and those that hear him.⁹²²

What then are we to make of these examples of 'godly' Church worship? The impression conveyed is of a stark simplicity fostered by an obsessive fear of intrusion, whether in doctrine, liturgy or ceremony, by values whose origins are thought to be found in the 'world'. The world, nature, and the natural man, though the creation of God, are fallen and are set in direct opposition to the divine plan. These service books support New's assertion that Puritanism presupposed a complete separation of God from the world.⁹²³ The mind of the natural man is depraved, perverted by the Fall. His reasoning is of this world and is incapable of discerning the divine will. The task of the Church is the

⁹¹⁸ *Directory for ... Publique Worship*, pp.54-55

⁹¹⁹ Ratcliffe, 'Puritan Alternatives', p.73, quoting Cardwell, *Conferences*, (Oxford, 1841), p.305

⁹²⁰ Ratcliffe, 'Puritan Alternatives', p.72 and *Directory for ... Publique Worship*, p.68

⁹²¹ *Directory for ... Publique Worship*, pp.19-29

⁹²² *Ibid.*, p.29

⁹²³ New, *Anglican and Puritan*, p.103

redemption of God's elect from the world through the preaching of the Word, the Gospel, and the establishment of a godly society in the kingdom of God. Church activity is centred on the need to edify the Church, and so to bring in a kingdom that is not of this world. To do so using methods other than those sanctioned by divine authority would be to fall into the ways of this world, which is the failing of the Papacy, held to be the Church of Antichrist. Schemes perceived to have been introduced since the supposed purity of the primitive Church are rejected. Not only should nothing be tolerated within the Church that Scripture forbids, but also, as Whitgift complains, the Puritan requires that 'nothing is to be tollerated in the Churche of Chryste, touching either doctrine, order, ceremonies, discipline, or governement, except it be expressed in the worde of God'.⁹²⁴ For Whitgift, that is an intolerable burden, an absurdity, for on many issues there is no scriptural warrant either discernible or intended. Yet, the Puritan insists, to permit the encroachment of the world's values is to introduce sin, and compromises the purity of the Church. Preaching has to be unadorned: elaboration by any means, by vestments, by ceremony, by 'superstitious' rites, by sophisticated music and singing, other than the plain singing of psalms, is rejected. Symbolism and ornament, ornate aids to worship and elaborate buildings are discarded.

Further evidence of this approach to worship can be seen in the Puritan design and usage of church buildings. Cathedrals, unless they can be used as preaching centres, have no point. The *Admonition* is vociferous in its criticism of these 'dennes ... of all loytering lubbers', foundations overstaffed by deans, canons, prebendaries, chancellors etc., all living in great idleness, not to mention the 'singingmen' and 'squeaking queresters [choristers]'. All these are seen as a legacy from the papacy, out of a 'Trojan horse's belly, to the destruction of God's kingdom'. No other Reformed Church in the world has such worthless institutions.⁹²⁵ This strident invective, Cross suggests, was 'asking [a] fundamental question'. In a Protestant Church, what justification can there be for these 'unreformed cathedral foundations', with their comparatively lavish endowments, whilst parish clergy lived in relative poverty.⁹²⁶ Staffing levels at some cathedrals were huge: by 1640, Lincoln Cathedral boasted a dean and fifty-two prebendaries, apart from those at other levels of appointment.⁹²⁷ The local parish church building was seen by the Puritan as no more than a meeting place for the Church and the dissemination of Christian teaching: it is required to

⁹²⁴ Whitgift, *Answer*, p.21

⁹²⁵ Field and Wilcox, *Admonition*, p.15

⁹²⁶ Cross, 'Loitering lubbers', p.232

⁹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.234

provide adequate facilities for the preacher to interpret the Scriptures to the people. Whereas in medieval churches the congregation might wander about the nave whilst the Mass was being performed behind a screen, many post-Reformation churches required seating during the long sermons and prayers.⁹²⁸ In a typical Presbyterian church, the pulpit and the pew would be imperatives. Altars, rood screens, wall paintings, images, and choir stalls were things of the past. They were considered the superstitious remnants of a dark age, designed to deceive people and detract from the preaching of the Word. Godly preachers must not only be supplied, they must be provided for, to replace the ‘bastard, idol and unpreaching ministrie of this church’.⁹²⁹

Historiographical analyses of the controversy

One noticeable feature to be found in analyses of the Admonition Controversy that have emerged over the past four hundred years is how often emphasis has been placed upon divergence between the contestants, rather than on areas of accord. Exceptions to this perception become evident in the second half of the twentieth century, and amongst these is Lake’s contribution. He argues for the existence of a doctrinal consensus in the Elizabethan Church, based on an ‘identity of outlook and interest between moderate puritan divines and certain bishops and influential laymen’. There was an overriding unity, he maintains, between moderate conformists and Presbyterians that transcended their differences. The common view of the implications of right doctrine enabled those who disagreed passionately on issues of polity to retain a collective experience and activity in a godly community.⁹³⁰ Fincham supports Lake’s view, arguing that in more recent analyses,

puritans have been dethroned as a coherent opposition ... [I]t is ... evident that puritan influence was pervasive. Its word-centred piety, and relentless activism ... is now found to have influenced courtiers, privy councillors and senior churchmen ...⁹³¹

Lake pursues his argument in *Anglicans and Puritans?*, in which he examines the nature of the controversy over the *Admonition*. He argues that, for Whitgift and Cartwright, when it came to disagreement, ‘it was always the “unity of the spirit” “amongst those which pertain to God” which was Cartwright’s prime concern and in this he was entirely typical of broader puritan opinion’.⁹³² Unity was essentially spiritual, not based on ecclesiastical regimentation or the outward uniformity of clerical dress. Lake quotes Cartwright’s

⁹²⁸ Yates, *Buildings*, p.24

⁹²⁹ [Cartwright], *Second Admonition*, reprinted in Frere and Douglas, *Puritan Manifestoes*, p.95

⁹³⁰ Lake, *Moderate Puritans*, p.282

⁹³¹ Fincham, ‘Introduction’, p.4

⁹³² Lake, *Anglicans and Puritans?*, p.29

assertion that disagreement over the surplice ‘neither should nor could ... break the unity of the spirit’.⁹³³

A more detailed review of the Whitgift-Cartwright debate follows below,⁹³⁴ but at this point we must ask, if externals were meaningless, why was the wearing of the surplice so adamantly refused by some, and why was it so forcefully prescribed by authority? In the event, the surplice became a divisive issue among those who, it is asserted, held much in common. We are not dealing here merely with fine details of religious observance, nor yet the application of ecclesiastical and State authority. If the surplice was a matter of indifference, the related religious concerns, which remained at issue, were not. If we claim that there was a consensus in the Elizabethan Church, then we also have to recognise that it was not all-embracing: there was an underlying divergence on perceived foundational matters of belief that was putting a strain on the accord. There remained deep-seated conflicting interpretations that were insuperable, but, in the sixteenth century, the outcome for most, for reasons we shall explore, was not separation.⁹³⁵

Support for the suggestion that the underlying contest in the *Admonition* was essentially doctrinal is found in the work of New. ‘World views were in collision’, is his thesis, ‘and the issues at stake were views of man, of the Church, of grace and nature, and the avenues of spiritual destiny’.⁹³⁶ Writing in the late 1960s, which was before the publication of the views of Lake, Fincham and Tyacke, he recognises the then standard historical interpretation of the tensions between ‘Anglicans’ and Puritans in the Elizabethan Church as predominantly political. In that analysis, he maintains, the crucial concern is seen as the authority of the Church and, behind that, the issue of royal supremacy.⁹³⁷ New argues against this ‘too secular’ interpretation, which he sees as a ‘process that forgets that the Church was a reservoir of faith and ideas, the oracle of an eternal *kerygma*’.⁹³⁸ The argument in his view — one with which I agree — was primarily about rudiments of faith. Underscoring the apparently ‘petty and malign’ debates about vestments and introits were deeper convictions, centred on Puritan attempts to make ‘practice conform to a preconceived philosophy’.⁹³⁹ New — arguing for the need to avoid tendencies, present even in the 1960s, to de-emphasize distinctions between the protagonists, given their common view on predestination — highlights the theological differences between

⁹³³ *Ibid.*, quoting Cartwright. See Cartwright, *Rephye*, quoted in Whitgift, *Works*, II, pp.60-61

⁹³⁴ See Below, pp.215-227

⁹³⁵ See below, pp.275-281

⁹³⁶ New, ‘Controversy’, p.211

⁹³⁷ New, *Anglican and Puritan*, p.3

⁹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p.4

⁹³⁹ *Ibid.*

Cartwright and Whitgift, a contest we shall be examining in greater detail in Chapter 7. In an analysis which seeks to engage with the perceived theological implications of the controversy, he claims that the debate over clerical apparel was not just a discussion about remaining ‘popishness’. It was, more seriously in Cartwright’s view, a question of human waywardness and our inability to discern error. The conflict over the form of Church government harboured within it a divergence on issues regarding the boundaries of Scriptural authority, given the effect of the Fall on the power of reason. New maintains that, ‘for Whitgift, total depravity ... [still] left man an unimpaired capacity for reason’, whereas Cartwright insisted that ‘every faculty was deficient’.⁹⁴⁰ Cartwright believed that the Scriptures alone revealed the model for Church organization and, moreover, for all human behaviour. Whitgift followed the classic Conformist view, which was advocated later by Hooker, that Scripture revealed all things necessary to salvation, but that matters of Church polity are not defined in Scripture: they are left open to the reasoned judgment of the Church. Finally, New identifies ‘a covert divergence between the extent of their reliance on the ... power of grace within the sacraments’.⁹⁴¹ He maintains that Whitgift saw the sacraments as an effective means of grace, whilst Cartwright stressed ‘prevenient grace’, the prior love of God for the sanctified person, independent of the sacraments. ‘Whitgift placed sacraments at the heart of worship whereas Cartwright elevated preaching to the primary place’.⁹⁴² New maintains that Whitgift argued that salvation is necessarily bound to the sacraments, that, effectively, the sacraments were the way to heaven.⁹⁴³ He notes Whitgift’s claim that ‘salvation ... is ... so tied to them [the sacraments], that none can be saved that willingly and wittingly is devoid of them, and not partakers of them’.⁹⁴⁴ That was an assertion that was bound to run counter to Cartwright’s emphasis on prevenient grace. For him, grace is not imparted as a response to the observance of Church ceremony and sacrament: saving grace is a relationship, a direct encounter with God, granted at conversion on the basis of personal repentance and faith.

By stressing the divergence between ‘Anglicans’ and Puritans as being theological, New draws our attention to an important distinction. He asserts that the differences were based on estranged religious philosophies: ‘The trivialities of the debate, at face level so insignificant, were really assumptions ... more deeply felt than clearly articulated’.⁹⁴⁵ The

⁹⁴⁰ New, ‘Controversy’, p.206

⁹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p.209

⁹⁴² *Ibid.*

⁹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p.210, citing Whitgift, *Works*, I, p.208, and II, pp.525, and 537-539

⁹⁴⁴ Whitgift, *Answer*, quoted in Whitgift, *Works*, II, p.537

⁹⁴⁵ New, ‘Controversy’, p.211

philosophical divergence was essentially religious in character, related to issues of faith, salvation, and what is meant by ‘the Church’.

In Chapter 7 we shall be examining three specific contests which manifested themselves in the late sixteenth century, and it is my assertion that these debates demonstrate my argument, namely, that devout Christian men, whose spirituality appears to be largely identical, giving evidence of devoutness which it would be difficult to criticise, found themselves, nonetheless, estranged by their differing understandings of the revelation of the divine will. Yet, this estrangement did not result, in their century, in a parting of the ways.

Early theological deviations

There was, however, one doctrinal departure beginning to materialise with which none of those engaged in the *Admonition* debate would have had any sympathy. Lake is among those who recognise an early dissentient anti-Calvinistic element emerging in the Elizabethan Church, an opposition that was largely held in check but which was forming a seed bed for the rise of Arminianism in subsequent decades. He believes that Hooker was ‘close to the ideological origins of English Arminianism’, whilst Andrewes’s position was evolving from an early sympathy with the prevailing dogma to an anti-Calvinist position in the 1590s. Porter, also referring to Elizabeth’s reign, maintains that theology then was a matter for debate, not of dissention, nor was it ‘an unchallenged Calvinist oration’. Both Porter and White identify others, such as the Cambridge polemicists Baro and Barrett, who, in the 1590s, questioned and preached against the doctrines of final perseverance, declaring that reprobation was not arbitrary, but dependant on the foreknowledge of God, and who asserted that Christ died for everyone. Such views — Porter’s, ‘Arminianism, *avant la letter*’ — were sufficiently unorthodox to cause deep divisions amongst intellectuals at Cambridge and these controversies were thought by Elizabeth to be ‘a matter tender and dangerous to weak human minds’, and deemed by Whitgift as unsuitable subjects for debate within the university. The deviation was considered crucial enough to result in the Lambeth Articles of 1595, the high point of Calvinist orthodoxy in the Church of England.⁹⁴⁶

Also, among such deviant arguments were those of Samuel Harsnett (1561-1631), Fellow of Pembroke Hall and later to become Archbishop of York (1628-31), who

⁹⁴⁶ The Lambeth Articles were drawn up by Dr. William Whitaker (1547/8-1595), Regius Professor of Divinity in Cambridge. They received the approval of Whitgift and Matthew Hutton (1529?-1606), Archbishop of York, together with several other bishops at Lambeth Palace on November 20, 1595. They did not obtain the approval of Queen Elizabeth I, who ordered their withdrawal.

preached a trenchant anti-Calvinist sermon on the 27th day of October, 1594⁹⁴⁷ at Paul's Cross, taking as his text Ezekiel 33:11, 'As I live (saith the Lord) I delight not in the death of the wicked'. He argued:

There is a conceit in the world (beloved) speakes little better of our gracious God, then this: and that is, That God should designe many thousands of soules to Hell before they were, not in eye to their faults, but to his own absolute will and power, and to get him glory in their damnation.

Now, touching Gods Glory ... this opinion hath told us a very inglorious and shamefull Tale: for it saith, The Almighty God would have many soules goe to Hell; and that they may come thither, they must sinne, that so he may have just cause to condemne them.⁹⁴⁸

This, and his following six assertions, are quintessentially Arminian, and are radical in an Elizabethan context:

1. Gods absolute will is not the cause of Reprobation; but sin.
2. No man is of an absolute necessity the childe of Hell, so as by Gods Grace, he may not avoid it.
3. God simply willeth and wisheth every living Soul to be saved, and to come to the Kingdom of Heaven.
4. God sent his Sonne to save every Soule, and to bring it to the Kingdom of Heaven.
5. Gods Son offereth Grace effectually to save every one, and to direct him to the Kingdom of Heaven.
6. The neglect and contempt of his Grace, is the cause why every one doth not come to Heaven; and not any privative Decree, Counsel, or determination of God.⁹⁴⁹

Such anti-predestinarian reservations were not only apparent — nor did they first manifest themselves — among Conformists in the sixteenth century. Thomas Freeman draws our attention to an emergent dissenting lay-led group, the 'Freewillers', who were assembling Separatist or semi-Separatist congregations as early as the 1550s in the counties of Essex, centred on Bocking, just north of Braintree, and in Kent, starting in Faversham in 1549.⁹⁵⁰ Individuals among the Freewillers, or 'Free Will Men', held to a spectrum of heterodox beliefs, including universalism and a denial of original sin, but they were united in their advocacy of the free-will of the individual and a denial of predestination. This brought them into contest with the national Church, entrenched in its predestinarian dogma, and they suffered resultant persecution at the hands of the Edwardian ecclesiastical authorities, and imprisonment and martyrdom under Mary Tudor. Suffering from their lack of theological training, many Freewillers, under pressure from the cream of English

⁹⁴⁷ Harsnett, *Sermon*, p.121. The 1656 and 1658 reprints of this sermon give the date as the 27th day of October, 'Anno Reginae Elizabethae 26' (1584), but F.W. Brownlow has shown that this is clearly incorrect. Brownlow, *Shakespeare, Harsnett*, p.42. The corrected date is followed by Fincham and Tyacke: *Altars Restored*, p.302

⁹⁴⁸ Harsnett, *Sermon*, pp.133-134

⁹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.148-149

⁹⁵⁰ Freeman, 'Dissenters', pp.129-134, and Hargrave, 'Freewillers', p.271

Reformed theologians, reverted to orthodoxy and, by 1559, having also suffered the death of some of their leaders, they remained ‘merely a memory, ... their congregations dispersed and their surviving leaders vanished into obscurity ... [leaving] virtually no traces of their existence’.⁹⁵¹ The failure of the Freewillers, Freeman argues, demonstrates the power of the Protestant ecclesiastical authority — even during their years of Marian persecution — successfully to suppress dissent and to impose a measure of control on Protestant congregations. Nevertheless, as O.T. Hargrave argues, the Freewillers were the first to protest against the established predestinarian views of the English Church, giving vent to opinions which were to manifest themselves more effectively among leading professors of theology at both Oxford and Cambridge in coming decades. The Freewillers can therefore be labelled, with some accuracy, as the first Arminians *avant la lettre*.⁹⁵²

Fascinating as these Freewillers might be, they are unfortunately something of a distraction from our main purpose, but the emergence of like anti-Calvinist sympathies were placing an added strain on unity and consensus in the last decades of the century. In the next chapter, we will turn to an analysis of three specific contests which manifested themselves, yet all of them were successfully contained within the Elizabethan national Church.

⁹⁵¹ Freeman, ‘Dissenters’, p.156

⁹⁵² Hargrave, ‘Freewillers’, p.280

Chapter 7

Sixteenth-Century Disputants

a. John Whitgift and Thomas Cartwright

Having examined, in the previous chapter, a number of issues at stake in religious debates in the Elizabethan Church, we turn our attention now to specific disputes between major contestants in that period in order to focus on the core issues that they held in common, and on those which divided them. We have reviewed the nature of one major disagreement in that era, the Admonition Controversy, and two major participants in that dispute were John Whitgift, later to become primate, and the Puritan/Presbyterian polemicist, Thomas Cartwright. The clash, in writing, between these two divines is the first of three disputes we shall explore in some detail.

Whitgift's *Answer* was his Conformist response to both the original *Admonition*, by Field and Wilcox, and the *Second Admonition*. It appeared in February 1572/3 and proved to be the first broadside in a war of words with Cartwright that was to result in Cartwright's *Replie* of 1573, Whitgift's *Defence* of 1574 and, finally, Cartwright's *Second Replie* and *The Rest of the Second Replie* in 1577. For those unable to gain easy access to the original texts, there are two useful publications that afford abridged or edited versions. The first of these is *The Works of John Whitgift*, which was edited by John Ayre in 1853 for the Parker Society and published in three volumes. The *Defence*, which forms the bulk of Ayre's edition, embodied, when first published in 1574, practically the whole of his *Answer* to the *Admonition* as well as lengthy quotations from Cartwright's *Replie*. Ayre follows Whitgift in quoting portions from all three works in his edition.

The second, more recent, book is Donald McGinn's *Admonition Controversy*, which was published in 1949 in two parts. The first section sets out to 'present an objective analysis of the Controversy, its issues, and its two chief contestants'.⁹⁵³ In section two, McGinn quotes selected and collated passages from the *Admonition* itself and from the publications of Whitgift and Cartwright. McGinn supports the standard interpretation that sees the debate as essentially about the ecclesiastical structure of the Church and the nature of its government and discipline. The purpose of the *Admonition*, he argues, is twofold: the destruction popish remnants and the establishment of a Church order based on

⁹⁵³ McGinn, *Admonition Controversy*, p.ix

Presbyterian interpretations of Scripture.⁹⁵⁴ McGinn notes that among the popish remnants, the *Admonition* singles out the *Book of Common Prayer* for severe criticism, given its origin in the Mass. He also notes that the authors justify their revolution on the grounds that they are restoring the Church to its pristine purity, but, other than commenting on the weakness of that assertion, he gives us little indication as to what, in his estimation, was the driving compulsion behind their desire for reform.

Whitgift's response is seen as a defense of episcopacy and conformity, which, McGinn argues, demonstrates a move away from his views at Cambridge as a disciple of Calvin. This is an alleged development in Whitgift's theological perception which enabled him, McGinn claims, to hold a more tolerant attitude towards Rome.⁹⁵⁵ McGinn's view is certainly supported by Whitgift's recognition of the historical continuity of the English Church from before the Reformation, an approach endorsed by Hooker in *Laves*, but such assertions are far removed from a rejection of Calvinist doctrine. The force of Whitgift's arguments evidently impresses McGinn; Cartwright's claim to have the support of Scripture for his position is refuted, and his views on the nature and practice of the 'primitive church' is considered flawed and inconsistent.⁹⁵⁶

There is a view that maintains that Whitgift should be seen as the defender of the middle ground against the polemics of Nonconformists from two extremes. Frere takes this approach when referring to the controversy, arguing that, following the Pope's bull excommunicating Elizabeth in 1570, the Elizabethan Church pursued a *via media*, a middle course between popery and the Presbyterianism of the extreme Puritans.⁹⁵⁷ The concept of a *via media* is one that we must treat with caution. The term, if not the concept, was unknown to the Elizabethan Church, and MacCulloch argues that the notion is a 'myth perpetuated by [nineteenth-century] clergy within the church with a particular motive in mind – to emphasize the Catholic continuity of the church over the Reformation period'.⁹⁵⁸ The Prayer Book, MacCulloch argues, was, in the 1550s, 'consciously aligned to Swiss theology'. It formed the 'most elaborate liturgy of any Protestant church in western Europe' and, because of its complexity, the resultant 'ambiguities' were exploited by Anglo-Catholics in their efforts, retrospectively, to establish a *via media* for the Elizabethan Church.⁹⁵⁹ Against MacCulloch's assertions is the view that the idea of moderation was well

⁹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p.50, quoting Field and Wilcox, *Admonition*, as quoted in Whitgift, *Works*, I, p.175

⁹⁵⁵ McGinn, *Admonition Controversy*, pp.137-138

⁹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.60-61

⁹⁵⁷ Frere, *English Church*, p.14

⁹⁵⁸ MacCulloch, 'Myth', p.1

⁹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.7-9

known to polemicists within the Elizabethan Church. Archbishop Parker asserted that he was being accused by the Queen of being ‘too soft and easy’, and by his brethren of being ‘too sharp and too earnest in moderation ... and [I] will still do [he insisted] until mediocrity⁹⁶⁰ shall be received amongst us’.⁹⁶¹ Lake maintains that ‘the whole debate between conformists and precisians can be seen as a struggle for the middle ground.’⁹⁶² He considers that the location of the ‘centre of the spectrum’ was the issue in debate as both Conformists and Puritans sought to appropriate for themselves the middle ground, the one in a desire to disassociate themselves from allegations of popery, the other from accusations of separatism.⁹⁶³ It is now time for us to examine the areas of contention in more detail.

The issues in dispute

Given the historiographical choices before us, which see the ‘Anglican’ and Puritan dispute as either, on the one hand, a rigid party conflict or, on the other, a conflict-free consensus, where would we place the dispute between Whitgift and Cartwright? They evidently disagreed passionately, in line with Lake’s analysis, over issues of polity. Are we able also to trace an underlying unity that transcended their differences, based, perhaps, on their shared doctrine of predestination, as proposed by Tyacke? New distances himself from that as a line of argument, asserting that it is based upon the assumption that the doctrine of predestination was a major article of faith for Whitgift. He insists that it was not, nor is it central to Calvinist dogma.⁹⁶⁴

Whitgift himself was certainly concerned at the lack of unity. ‘These men’, he complains, ‘thinke it an heynous offence to weare a cap or a surplesse, but in slaundring and back-biting their brethren, ... they have no conscience’.⁹⁶⁵ He was alarmed at Puritan refusals to unite in worship. ‘These men separate themselves also from the congregation, and wyll communicate wyth us neyther in prayers, hearing the worde, nor sacramentes: they condemne and despise all those that bee not of their secte’.⁹⁶⁶ He made a direct challenge to Puritans over the discordant nature of their contentions over the Prayer Book. In his defence of the Elizabethan Prayer Book against Puritan arguments expressed both in the

⁹⁶⁰ ‘Mediocrity’, used in the original sixteenth-century sense: ‘The quality or condition of being intermediate between two extremes’: *Oxford English Dictionary*, second edition (1989) IX, p.552

⁹⁶¹ Letter of Archbishop Parker to Sir William Cecil, April 1563, reprinted in Bruce and Perowne, *Parker Correspondence*, p.173

⁹⁶² Lake, *Moderate Puritans*, p.77

⁹⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶⁴ New, ‘Controversy’, p.204

⁹⁶⁵ Whitgift, *Answer*, unpaginated, 284th page (image 142 in EEBO)

⁹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, unpaginated, 285th page, (image 142 in EEBO)

Admonition and in Cartwright's treatises, he insisted that none of the deficiencies they identified were serious enough to warrant division amongst godly men:

I doe not beléeve [*sic*] it to bée [*sic*] so perfecte, but that there maye be bothe added to it, and taken from it. But thys I saye, that it is a godly booke, withoute any errour in substance of doctrine, and nothing in it (that I knowe) agaynst the worde of God: and those imperfections, ... not to be suche, that any godly man oughte to stirre up any contention in the Church for them, muche lesse to make a schism.⁹⁶⁷

However, faced with the force of Puritan disputations, Whitgift was not going to let them pass in order to maintain what he considered to be a false unity. Whitgift's rejoinders to the arguments contained in Cartwright's *Rephye* struck at the root of their differences, identifying what he terms the 'two false principles and rotten pillars'⁹⁶⁸ which supported Cartwright's assertions. These are the claim that the Church must necessarily retain the same form as that of the primitive apostolic Church, and the second, that nothing may be retained in the Church that had been 'abused' by pre-Reformation popish practice.⁹⁶⁹ For Whitgift, these were not matters of detail. They were critical considerations about the nature of the Church, and the foundations for right worship and practice. A united view on predestination was not sufficient to negate the effect of this disagreement. The contest centred on the role of Scripture, when both accepted biblical authority. The issue was where they placed the boundaries of that authority. Whitgift maintained that Cartwright was including and excluding whatever pleased him: the controversy was about what part of the Reformation is agreeable to the Word of God, and what is not; also, what it is to be agreeable to the Word of God.⁹⁷⁰ Cartwright's argument was that reformation must bring the Church to its primitive purity, and that meant, on his understanding, a biblically sanctioned Presbyterian order:

Nothing is to be tolerated in the Church of Christe touching either doctrine, order, ceremonies, disciplin or government, except it be expressed in the word of God.

The reason for this is centred on human depravity: 'the infirmitie of man can neyther attaine to the perfection of anything, ... neyther yet be free from erreure in the thyngs he speaketh or giveth out'. The consequence is clear:

The Lord hath commanded it should be in his church; therefore it must be: and of the other side: He hath not commanded; therefore it must not be.⁹⁷¹

⁹⁶⁷ Whitgift, *Defence*, p.75

⁹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, Preface to the Reader, a.iir

⁹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷⁰ Whitgift, *Answer*, p.150, quoted in *Whitgift Works*, I, p.93

⁹⁷¹ Cartwright, *Rephye*, p.13

Whitgift resisted this approach. He denied ‘that the scriptures do express particularly everything that is to be done in the church’. He maintained that Scripture’s authority extended to issues of faith and salvation. ‘Nothing ought to be tolerated in the Church, as necessarie unto salvation, or as an article of faith, except it be expresly contained in the worde of God, or may manifestly therof be gathered.’ Thus he rejected transubstantiation, the sacrifice of the mass, the authority of the Bishop of Rome, and image worship.⁹⁷² When addressing the substance of Church government, he acknowledged that it

must indeed be taken out of the word of God, and consisteth in [is confined to] these points, that the word be truly taught, the sacraments rightly administered, virtue furthered, vice repressed, and the church kept in quietness and order.⁹⁷³

Those, for Whitgift, were the matters of substance. The details, on the other hand, of ceremony and Church government, including clerical orders in the Church, are not matters of substance, and they are not issues of faith and salvation. As a result they are not ‘namely and particularly expressed in the scriptures, but ... left to the discretion and liberty of the church, to be disposed according to the state of the times, places and persons’.⁹⁷⁴ Cartwright countered this assertion, complaining: ‘it is no small injury which you do unto the word of God, to pin it in so narrow a room’.⁹⁷⁵ He insisted that ceremonies, orders, discipline and Church government are matters of faith and salvation⁹⁷⁶, a response which astonished Whitgift. ‘That ... is a doctrine strange and unheard of to me’.⁹⁷⁷

There is a theological divergence apparent here, which is unbridgeable if maintained. Both men acknowledged the authority of Scripture, but Whitgift’s stance regarding Scripture, and his understanding of the limited relevance of primitive Church order to later generations, left the Church free to order its offices, structure, and worship in accordance with his Conformist perceptions of the visible Church institution. It was sufficient, for the Conformist, to demonstrate that the chosen practices, whilst not directly sanctioned, were not contrary to the Word of God. Thus, its government may be adapted to maintain the Church in ‘quietness and order’ within its culture and location. Episcopacy was not contrary to the Word of God, and was seen as the form of Church government most suited to its present circumstances.⁹⁷⁸ ‘I told you before’, Whitgift insisted, ‘that the diversity of time and state of the church requireth diversity of government in the same. It cannot be

⁹⁷² Whitgift, *Answer*, p.21, quoted in Whitgift, *Works*, I, p.180

⁹⁷³ Whitgift, *Defense*, quoted in Whitgift, *Works*, I, p.6

⁹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷⁵ Cartwright, *Replie*, p.14, quoted in Whitgift, *Works*, I, p.187

⁹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.180-181

⁹⁷⁷ Whitgift, *Defense*, quoted in Whitgift, *Works*, I, p.181

⁹⁷⁸ New, *Anglican and Puritan*, p.55

governed in time of prosperity as it is in time of persecution'.⁹⁷⁹ Not until Bancroft, and his sermon at Paul's Cross in 1589, was there a claim from Conformists that episcopacy was ordained of God, or that it is taught in the Scriptures.⁹⁸⁰ Such a concept was not to be vigorously pursued until developed in the seventeenth century by Jacobean divines, such as Andrewes and Laud.

It was, in Whitgift's time, the Conformist view that episcopacy is the most beneficial form of Church government in a time of prosperity for the Church, such as existed in the sixteenth century. For the Puritan, Church discipline was primarily designed not in the interests of the institution, nor for the order and acceptability of the Church's worship, but to meet their overriding concern for the elect. The former issues, the institution and the worship, were required to serve the interests of the latter, the people of God. Indeed, for Cartwright, the power and effect of Scripture is intended to provide a complete rule for life, to cover all things 'that fall into any part of man's life'.⁹⁸¹ Scripture is the controlling power in personal godliness for the Christian believer. The duty of the Church is to bring that authority to bear through the medium of preaching and discipline. Thus, whilst the structure of the Church, as an institution, was of importance to the Puritan, it was seen as a means to an end, which was to bring about the redeeming, sanctifying and edifying purposes of the Church among the elect. The Church imparted grace through its visible structure of ministers in their preaching, by the administration of the sacraments and through strict disciplinary procedures. The result would be, ideally, a godly people.

A further distinction can be identified in the relative understandings of the Church. The Puritan de-emphasized distinctions between the visible and the invisible Church. The Church, which excluded the Roman Church, was viewed as a spiritual entity fulfilling a spiritual task. Whitgift took a different approach. He made a distinction between visible and invisible Church and its government:

There are two kinds of government within the church, the one invisible, the other visible; the one spiritual, the other external. The invisible and spiritual government ... is when God, by his Spirit, gifts, and ministry of his word, doth govern it, by ruling in the hearts and consciences of men, and directing them in all things necessary to everlasting life: this kind of government is indeed necessary to salvation, and it is in the church of the elect only.⁹⁸²

With God directly ruling the hearts and consciences of the invisible Church, the visible Church, with its external discipline and visible ceremonies, becomes the responsibility of

⁹⁷⁹ Whitgift, *Answer*, quoted in Whitgift, *Works*, III, p.176

⁹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.180-181

⁹⁸⁰ New, *Anglican and Puritan*, p.55

⁹⁸¹ Cartwright, *Replie*, quoted in Whitgift, *Works*, I, p.190

⁹⁸² Whitgift, *Defence*, quoted in Whitgift, *Works*, I, p.183

men. Thus, as New argues, 'Anglicanism' distinguished between the Church visible and invisible, but not between Church and State. In general, the Puritan maintained the unity of a spiritual visible Church whilst separating Church and State. A one-kingdom theory, which yielded ecclesiastical initiative to the State, collided with a two-kingdom theory, which did not. In the Presbyterian view, the Church alone had the right to settle issues of doctrine and practice, through its offices of ministers, seniors and deacons as interpreters of the Word. That is not to detract from the authority of the magistrate: Field and Wilcox had insisted:

Not that we meane to take away the authoretie of the civill Magistrate and chief govenour, to whom we wish all blessedness, ... but that Christ being restored into his kyngdome, to rule in the same by the sceptre of his word, and severe discipline.⁹⁸³

The State, the civil authorities, the lay magistrates, were the enforcing, not the instigating, agents.⁹⁸⁴ Hence we have different understandings on the related issue of 'discipline'. To the Conformists, discipline meant outward submission to ecclesiastical and civil authority; for the Puritans, it meant, as New describes it, 'the ferreting-out of sin'.⁹⁸⁵

The weakness in Whitgift's view of the visible Church was that it left issues of Church polity open to the vagaries of 'discretion and liberty' exercised by an episcopate, acting under the control of Privy Council and Prince, which, whilst claiming authority for its position, remained fallible. Whether they could be justified or not, decisions were authoritative, obedience was required, and dissention was considered treachery. His position further begs the question as to why divine revelation is considered essential on the issues of salvation, but not in matters of polity? If reason is capable on matters of Church order, why is it not also competent in areas of faith and salvation? Cartwright was consistent in that theoretically he submitted himself to an authority outside of himself, to Scriptural authority in all matters, but his case was weakened by Puritan inconsistencies in argument and interpretation. When differences emerged, reliance on the Presbytery was no guarantee of unanimity. Cartwright's position was further compromised by his own questionable logic. As Collinson has observed, 'Calvinists were not noticeably immune from the perennial tendency to find in the Bible what one has good reason to look for ... there was a strong element of pragmatism in the Presbyterian programme'.⁹⁸⁶ Cartwright was not exempt from this tendency. His arguments were, in McGinn's view, flawed by inconsistent and illogical reasoning, together with doubtful interpretations of Scripture,

⁹⁸³ Field and Wilcox, *Admonition*, unpaginated, [p.13]. Also, Frere and Douglas, *Puritan Manifestoes*, p.18

⁹⁸⁴ New, *Anglican and Puritan*, p.47

⁹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p.48

⁹⁸⁶ Collinson, *Puritan Movement*, p.111

constructions that were made to conform to pre-conceived assumptions. McGinn concludes, for example, that scholars are ‘forced to admit that the scriptural basis for ... [the Puritan] idea of the “primitive church” is an illusion ... the “rotten pillar” which Whitgift declared it to be’.⁹⁸⁷ Even Scott Pearson admits: ‘The Puritans professed to find their ideas in Scripture, but they frequently found there just what they sought’. Scott Pearson maintains that the Puritans were expecting to discover in the New Testament the system of ecclesiastical government ordained by God, and in bringing their own mode of interpretation to bear, they found what they were looking for: their Presbyterian model in the Apostolic Church.

The Puritans looked [in the Scriptures] for their model with minds prepared in a certain direction. We are convinced that they looked for what they saw, and that they based their beliefs ... upon revelation as interpreted by their own rational preconceptions.⁹⁸⁸

Whitgift, on the other hand, found no prescriptive model of Church government in Scripture at all.⁹⁸⁹ Whilst there is no suggestion from Scott Pearson or McGinn that Whitgift had fallen into the same trap in reverse — that he did not find in Scripture what he did not wish to find — had he done so he would still have been consistent with his view that men and women retain the capacity for reason in a fallen world. The result of Cartwright’s alleged failure faithfully to subject himself to Scriptural authority effectively left him, like Whitgift, subject to his own reason. Given his views on the depravity of reason, which has to include his own, he was left without a basis for his arguments. From this perspective, Whitgift might be considered to hold the more viable position, but, against that, it could be argued that Cartwright demonstrated a greater concern — in his rejection of separation from his pastoral responsibilities — for the people. His aim was to achieve a ‘godly’ Church, comprised of saints, rather than an ordered institutional structure.

The heart of the matter

It is a noticeable feature of sixteenth-century religious controversy that allowance was rarely made for individual conscience. Toleration of divergent belief and practice was not an acceptable concept. There could be only one truth, and, whichever stance was being upheld, all else was considered to be false, if not heretical. Uniformity and conformity was required for the good of the whole. Contenders in religious debate held to their convictions with dogmatism, and when differences manifested themselves, the path to resolution often

⁹⁸⁷ McGinn, *Admonition Controversy*, p.63

⁹⁸⁸ Scott Pearson, *Church and State*, pp.123-124

⁹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

proved difficult to find, even deliberately avoided. To compromise was a sin, and the deliberate cross-fertilization of views was a rarity. The antagonists were given to ranting at each other from their respective corners, only on rare occasions coming together with the aim of achieving a considered and agreed conclusion. Participants complained of the lack of brotherly affection from their opponents, yet they rarely conceded it. In this scenario, the dispute between Whitgift and Cartwright was no exception. Their writings provide few instances that demonstrate a desire for reconciliation and consensus. Unity, unless it was to be achieved by turning a blind eye, required submission to terms insisted upon by the protagonists on each side.

If this perception is right, then what are we to make of the views of historians, such as Tyacke and Fincham, who argue that there was a coming together of puritan and Establishment ideas as Reformed protestant attitudes became pervasive in the Elizabethan Church. As we have already noted, Lake, using phrases such as ‘doctrinal consensus’, ‘identity of outlook and interest’, and ‘collective experience’, goes so far as to identify a ‘unity of the Spirit’ that was sufficient to transcend their differences.⁹⁹⁰ Yet, for the 1570s, it is difficult to find evidence in the written sources of an acknowledged unanimity. Moreover, given the confrontational language to be found in the Whitgift-Cartwright debate, ‘unity of the Spirit’ might be considered a phrase unsuited to the relationship between these disputants. Should we then conclude that the assertions of the ‘consensus’ lobby are mistaken, or is there, perhaps, a dichotomy here that has an explanation?

It would be difficult to deny that there were concerns that divided Conformists and Puritans. Even those who argue for a consensus acknowledge that there was disagreement over details of Church polity, whilst the issues that held them together did relate to some matters of doctrine, outlook and experience. Certainly, Whitgift himself maintained that the Puritan protests raised no biblically proven issue of doctrine:

They allege not one article of faith, or point of doctrine, nor one piece of any substance, to be otherwise taught ... in this church ... than by prescript word of God may be justified; neither can they.⁹⁹¹

If, he further argues, it is alleged that some in the Church do not preach acknowledged doctrines, then clearly ‘not every man’s folly is to be ascribed to the whole church’. Whitgift’s remarks appear to support Lake’s assertion that common views on doctrine, and the implications of right doctrine, had brought together in a collective experience and activity those disagreeing passionately on issues of polity.

⁹⁹⁰ See above, pp.209-210

⁹⁹¹ Whitgift, *Answers*, quoted in Whitgift, *Works*, I, p.291

However, even viewed from that perspective the argument is not entirely convincing: we are still left without an adequate explanation for the considerable division evident over these issues of polity. An assertion that there could be unanimity on doctrine between those who differed so aggressively over church worship and Church polity requires explanation. Lake does offer an answer when, in his analysis of the Admonition Controversy, he acknowledges that whilst recent scholarship emphasizes the existence and importance of a Calvinist consensus in the Elizabethan Church, it also shows the extent to which a common adherence to Calvinism did not lead to agreement on other issues. What is of significance is that Lake concedes that these differences were not — as I also maintain — just about ceremonies and ecclesiastical institutions. ‘They encompassed more profound differences ... over the nature of true religion, the community of the godly, and the role of that community in constituting a definition of right ecclesiastical, religious and secular order’.⁹⁹² Lake is identifying here differences between the Puritans and ‘Anglicans’ that were so ‘profound’ that they transcended the ‘pervasive’ unity founded on shared Calvinist beliefs. His arguments at this point are surprising, given his final conclusion that Whitgift’s role in the debate was ‘essentially defensive, ... [his] religious position or style of piety ... a palid one-dimensional version of the Puritan one’.⁹⁹³ I endorse the view that the differences were indeed weighty; there were underlying theological concerns which surfaced as disagreements over Church polity, such as those highlighted in the disputes over vestments, and over the Prayer Book. It was this fundamental philosophical divergence that subjugated unity based on shared Calvinist doctrine, rather than doctrinal consensus which sublimated divergence over polity. But, however strong the disagreement, it was not, in the Elizabethan Church, sufficient to cause separation, and the reason for this will require explanation.

Lake holds that the underlying divergence was fostered by Puritan rather than Conformist convictions. He finds no ground for claiming that, for Whitgift, ceremonies edified, or held any religious significance. ‘Nor is there any sign in his thought of a sacrament — rather than a word-centred style of piety’.⁹⁹⁴ In a separate article in which Lake seeks to re-examine the definition of Puritanism, he asserts that it was the ideological intensity of Puritan belief about the fallen condition of mankind, and Puritan understanding of the role of the Church in bringing redemption to mankind, which drove their reforming activity:

⁹⁹² Lake, *Anglicans and Puritans?*, p.42

⁹⁹³ *Ibid.*, p.66

⁹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.65

Given the propensity (in the eyes of the godly at least) towards sin, irreligion, and ignorance of many of the English, [there] was a[n] ... obligation on the elect remnant ... to be active in the cause of true religion. ... It was their sensitivity to concerns like these ... which prompted Puritans ... to take the lead in the pursuit of reformation ... Ideological considerations were at work.⁹⁹⁵

However, I wish to emphasize — as does New — that the Conformists did make their own significant theological contribution to the divergence, views that were not just expressed as a defensive resistance to the more radical elements in Puritan pressure for change. Whitgift maintained views about the Fall which were set in opposition to Puritan assertions about the all-embracing effect of human depravity. He asserted that whilst man was fallen, his reason was not wholly depraved. The *ecclesia*, under the Crown, given our retained faculty of discursive reason, provided structured forms of worship designed for a Church given to the glory of God rather than as a gathering of the saints. Uniformity of ceremony and worship was required not only in submission to the Supreme Governor, but as a united expression of right worship. There are indications that Whitgift saw the sacraments as a means of grace. They become for the believer ‘seales of Gods promises, ... testimonies and effectuall signes of the grace of God, and of our redemption in Chryste Jesus, by the which the spirite of God dothe invisibly worke in us, not onely the increase of fayth, but confirmation also’. To deny them is to reject salvation: ‘whosoever contemneth these external signes, and refuseth them, cannot be a member of Chryst, neither yet saved’.⁹⁹⁶ Against that the Puritans relied on prevenient grace, and their views about the condition of mankind and the role of the Church inspired an all-encompassing concern with the potentially transforming effects of the gospel on both individuals and on the social order as a whole.⁹⁹⁷ Thus, if Church order, surplices, ceremonies and Prayer Books proved to be a distraction then they must be reformed or eliminated. The Puritan world view demanded the reformation of detail.

This is not to deny that Whitgift saw the need for preaching, together with the right administration of the sacraments, as being an essential part of the Church’s divine role. Therein lay a consensus. But, for Whitgift, preaching and even the sacraments were not so much tools in the task of the redemption of mankind as essential elements in the good order of the Church, the visible, if imperfect, body that included the invisible Church of God. He claimed to have Calvin on his side in that regard:

⁹⁹⁵ Lake, ‘Defining Puritanism’, p.10

⁹⁹⁶ Whitgift, *Answers*, pp.189-190

⁹⁹⁷ Lake, *Moderate Puritans*, p.279

... the essential note of the true church be these only; the true preaching of the word of God, and the right administration of the sacraments: ... Master Calvin saith ... 'wheresoever we see the word of God truly preached, and God according to the same truly worshipped, and the sacraments without superstition administered, there we may ... conclude the church of God to be, although ... many faults and errors be found'.⁹⁹⁸

The outward marks of preaching, the sacraments, and the true worship of God were cited as authentication of the institution as the Church of God. Significantly, 'discipline' here is not identified as one of the marks of the true Church; it has been replaced by the concept of 'true worship'. By comparison, for the Puritan, authenticity is found in the input of godly ministry amongst the congregation. Cartwright's view of the Church and its task laid powerful emphasis on its redemptive and edifying role, directed towards the individual elect believer:

... every congregation must have a pastor ... which is able, and doth intend feeding of them, every way, by preaching doctrine, by exhorting to the same, and to godly life, by admonishing offenders, by conference with them, by visiting the sicke, to teache and counsell them, by Cathechising the congregation, by making prayers, by ministering the sacraments, and examining beforehand the communicantes, and whatsoever he is directed unto by the prescripte of the woorde of God.⁹⁹⁹

The Puritan saw the Church as a gathering of the saints. Puritan ministry was a people-centred work and the Church was the centre of God's activity towards his elect. It must, therefore, participate in God's redemptive activity, it must bring redemption from divine justice to the people, it must edify them, lead, admonish, discipline them, and pray for them. If the Church did not do that then it failed as a Church. For the Conformist the Church must provide for the right worship of God, its services must be uniform, seemly, and reverent expressions of men and women's spiritual aspirations towards the divine Majesty.

It is unfortunate that, when facing these issues, the Puritans and Conformists concluded that the two objectives were incompatible; they were unable to find a way to combine the benefits of each other's doctrinal insight. Ironically, similar questions still face the Church of England in the twenty-first century. What is the purpose of religion? What is the prime task of the Church? Is it the worship of God, or is it the redemption of men and women? Even today, after four centuries, the Church finds itself grappling with the same complex task of making both of these goals a united and living reality. In summary, I accept that there was in place general agreement between Cartwright and Whitgift on Reformed

⁹⁹⁸ Whitgift, *Defence*, quoted in Whitgift, *Works*, I, p.185.

⁹⁹⁹ [Cartwright], *Second Admonition*, reprinted in Frere and Douglas, *Puritan Manifestoes*, p.100

Calvinist dogma, despite differences regarding its application in practice. Against this consensus, the remaining disputes over issues that manifested themselves in clashes over Church polity should be seen as driven by the underlying philosophies. These caused serious arguments, driven by insistent opinions that rendered unity in practice well-nigh non-existent. The question that remains unanswered is why, given their divisions, both remained together in the established Church institution at the end of the sixteenth century: was it solely agreement on Reformed dogma that held them together, or were there other factors? On this issue, we shall draw conclusions later in chapter 8,¹⁰⁰⁰ after we have first taken the opportunity to examine other important contests, those involving Hooker and Travers, and Andrewes and Perkins.

b. Richard Hooker and Walter Travers

Although to know [God] be life, ... yet our soundest knowledge is to know that we know him not as indeed he is, neither can know him: ... our safest eloquence concerning him is our silence, ... therefore it behoveth our words to be wary and few.

Richard Hooker¹⁰⁰¹

The disputation which we now examine, that between the Conformist thinker, Richard Hooker, and the Presbyterian activist, Walter Travers, was both personal and direct given that for a period of twelve months they both preached in the same London church. Turning first to Hooker, his importance as a theologian to the Church of England and to the formation of a distinctive theological stance, if critics are to be believed, can hardly be in doubt. Whilst, as Williams admits, ‘it has long been recognised that Hooker’s many gifts did not include what a modern audience would regard as the popular touch’,¹⁰⁰² it is Hillerdal’s claim that his *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie* ‘has probably meant more than any other book in shaping ... Anglicanism’.¹⁰⁰³ John S. Marshall maintains that ‘it is hard to overestimate [Hooker’s] importance’,¹⁰⁰⁴ whilst Archbishop A.E.T. Harper believes that ‘very few ... would resist the view that Richard Hooker is even more formative of Anglican Theology and the Anglican theological method than was Thomas Cranmer of Anglican liturgy’.¹⁰⁰⁵ Nichols goes so far as to argue that his work represents ‘the true beginning of

¹⁰⁰⁰ Below, specifically from p.272

¹⁰⁰¹ Hooker, *Ecclesiasticall Politie*, p.46

¹⁰⁰² Williams, ‘Foreward’, p.xv

¹⁰⁰³ Hillerdahl, *Hooker*, p.9

¹⁰⁰⁴ Marshall, *Hooker*, ‘Preface’, p.v

¹⁰⁰⁵ Harper, ‘Contemporary Anglicanism’, p.1

Anglicanism',¹⁰⁰⁶ while Avis insists that 'Richard Hooker is unquestionably the greatest Anglican theologian'.¹⁰⁰⁷

Hooker's writings are particularly pertinent to our enquiry given that they were conceived in contention and have continued to be the subject of controversy. Our analysis however is rendered problematic by the way that his work, as W. Speed Hill notes, 'has been parcelled out among various scholarly disciplines - each of which has its own reasons for reading him'.¹⁰⁰⁸ Michael Brydon, in his comprehensive examination of Hooker's early reputation as the icon of Anglicanism,¹⁰⁰⁹ observes that in the renewed quest for a theologically grounded Anglican philosophy many contemporary ecclesial groups, ranging from conservative Evangelicals to progressive Liberals, in their claim to be true heirs of classical Anglicanism, have sought to enlist Hooker as the historic hero in support of their agenda. 'Once again Hooker has become integral to the interpretation and identification of Anglicanism'.¹⁰¹⁰

The most significant of all readings has to be the influential and persistent stereotype of Hooker portrayed by Anglican 'High Church' analysts functioning under the influence of the nineteenth-century Oxford Movement. Prominent among those who instigated this understanding were Newman, before his conversion to Roman Catholicism, and John Keble (1792-1866). They both sought to identify Hooker with a middle way for Anglicanism, a '*via media*' between Roman Catholicism and 'Popular Protestantism'.¹⁰¹¹ Keble edited an influential edition of Hooker's works, published in 1836, that proved to be the standard for more than a hundred years. He maintained that it was Hooker who instigated a 'decisive change' away from Reformation doctrine in the English Church, setting the stage as he did for seventeenth-century Conformists, such as Laud, Hammond and Sanderson, enabling the English Church to progress 'at such a distance from that of Geneva, and so near to primitive truth and apostolic order'.¹⁰¹² The *Laves* provide a

treasure of primitive, catholic maxims and sentiments, seasonably provided for this Church, at a time when she was ... in a fair way to fall as low towards rationalism, as the lowest of the protestant congregations are now fallen.¹⁰¹³

¹⁰⁰⁶ Nichols, *Panther*, p.43

¹⁰⁰⁷ Avis, *Anglicanism*, p.47

¹⁰⁰⁸ Speed Hill, 'Editor's Preface', p.ix

¹⁰⁰⁹ 1600-1714

¹⁰¹⁰ Brydon, *Evolving Reputation*, p.198

¹⁰¹¹ 'Popular Protestantism': Separatists, Presbyterians, Baptists, Independents and other dissenting Protestants: Lecture I, 'The Nature and Ground of Roman and Protestant Errors' in Newman, *Via Media*, pp.79-85

¹⁰¹² Keble, *Hooker*, I, 'Preface', p.cxv., cited by Atkinson, *Hooker*, p.xii

¹⁰¹³ Keble, *Hooker*, I, 'Preface', p.cv.

In like vein Newman also reasoned for a detached position for the Church of England. 'I wanted to bring out in a substantive form a living Church of England, in a position proper to herself, founded on [its own] distinct principles'.¹⁰¹⁴ Nichols considers that Hooker's purpose in the *Laws* was, similarly, to 'present the Church of England as reformed, yet also the heir to the Catholic centuries'.¹⁰¹⁵ Lake, whilst acknowledging that 'Anglicanism' did not exist at the time of Hooker, is a supporter of this interpretation. Indeed, he goes further, maintaining that Anglicanism 'came to exist ... largely because Hooker invented it'.¹⁰¹⁶ Regardless of the fact that the terms '*via media*' and 'Anglican' appear nowhere in *Laws*,¹⁰¹⁷ Hooker was, he maintains, advocating by design a new concept, his intention being to establish a new 'Anglican' position distanced from the extremes of Geneva and Rome:

Hooker was the first conformist to locate the English church between Rome ... and an image of Presbyterian and Genevan-style extremism, ... If a crucial element in the ideology of "anglicanism" was the claim to have maintained a middle path between Rome and Geneva then Hooker deserves considerable credit for having been the first divine to formulate that proposition.¹⁰¹⁸

Lake's thesis is that

while Hooker ... used arguments and principles taken from ... contemporary contexts, he used those basic conceptual building blocks to construct an overall argument which ... was new.¹⁰¹⁹

Collinson gives some support to this 'audacious claim'. He agrees that Hooker was not just an apologist for the Elizabethan Establishment, and he highlights Lake's assertion that 'Hooker had a more ambitious agenda ... He was not so much defensively recapitulating Anglicanism as inventing it'.¹⁰²⁰ These 'Anglican' interpretations have their problems, and they are far from finding universal acceptance.

Brydon maintains that Hooker's alleged 'innovative qualities' have not always been recognised because he worked within the constraints of his sixteenth-century soteriological framework. He disguised his adaptations of Reformed theology by criticising only those common to 'the Presbyterian and Puritans he was officially opposing'. Brydon also enlists Lake in support when he claims that 'Hooker's whole project represented a sort of sleight of hand whereby what amounted to a full scale attack on Calvinist piety was passed off as a

¹⁰¹⁴ Newman, *Apologia*, p.79

¹⁰¹⁵ Nichols, *Panther*, p.44

¹⁰¹⁶ Lake, *Anglicans and Puritans?*, p.227

¹⁰¹⁷ Brydon, *Evolving Reputation*, p.1

¹⁰¹⁸ Lake, *Anglicans and Puritans?*, p.159

¹⁰¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.227

¹⁰²⁰ Collinson, 'Establishment', p.151

simple exercise in anti-presbyterianism ... brilliantly conceived and cleverly executed'.¹⁰²¹ This allegation is precisely that contended against him by his Puritan adversaries, that he was covertly seeking to undermine the Reformation and, with it, their beloved Genevan doctrines. Brydon accepts the precision of their assertions on this issue, despite their 'numerous errors of interpretation' elsewhere.¹⁰²² But, as Nigel Atkinson reminds us, it is hardly a wise course to accept the accuracy of the Puritan assessment of Hooker's work,¹⁰²³ and it flies in the face of Hooker's own assurances. He had appealed to his disciplinarian readers:

... regard not who it is which speaketh, but waigh onely what is spoken. Thinke not that ye reade the wordes of one, who bendeth himselfe as an adversary against the truth which ye have alreadie embraced; but the words of one, who desireth even to embrace together with you the selfe same truth, if it be the truth; and for that cause (for no other God hee knoweth) hath undertaken the burthensome labour of this painefull kinde of conference.¹⁰²⁴

The widely received reading, based upon the nineteenth-century postulate of an Anglican *via media*, is disputed by a number of historians who assert, with W.J. Torrance Kirby, that

in general, the interpretation of the doctrine and institutions of the Elizabethan and Jacobean Church in recent historiography has tended to dismiss the *via media* hypothesis as inappropriate and anachronistic ... the continued use of this paradigm presents an impediment to the critical interpretation of his thought.¹⁰²⁵

He considers the application of the label to Hooker as 'truly a marvel', and he insists that 'the current assumption of Hooker's commitment to a peculiarly Anglican *via media* is theologically imprecise and ultimately misleading with regard to the central purpose underlying the composition of the *Laws*'.¹⁰²⁶

The important issue at stake, in our attempts at an analysis of Hooker, is what he understood by 'The Reformation'. Revisionists deny that Hooker attempted to distance himself from Protestant orthodoxy: he was explicit in his Reformed outlook, a theologian who maintained a stance not mid-way between Rome and the English, or even the Continental, Reformation but between popery and radical Puritanism, which is not the same thing. Hooker's stance was in opposition to disciplinarian modes of thought on the grounds that disciplinarian theology is incompatible with mainstream Reformed

¹⁰²¹ Brydon, *Evolving Reputation*, pp.12-13, and Lake, *Anglicans and Puritans?*, p.239

¹⁰²² Brydon, *Evolving Reputation*, p.12

¹⁰²³ Atkinson, *Hooker*, p.xix

¹⁰²⁴ Hooker, *Works*, I, p.3

¹⁰²⁵ Torrance Kirby, 'Theory', p.683

¹⁰²⁶ Torrance Kirby, 'Apologist', p.222

theology.¹⁰²⁷ In an analysis which has as its starting point an ‘abandonment of the anachronistic hypothesis of the Anglican *via media*’, Torrance Kirby maintains that ‘Hooker [was] in actuality a proponent of the principles of magisterial reform in England’,¹⁰²⁸ which the ‘disciplinarians’, represented by Travers and Cartwright, were not. Hooker’s Reformed credentials he considers impeccable, including his reliance on the Protestant principle of *sola Scriptura* — ‘Scripture alone can reveal the supernatural way of salvation’ — this in spite of his appeal to the authority of natural law — the twofold knowledge of God, first as creator, then as redeemer — which is perceived, in standard interpretations, to be a deviation from Protestant orthodoxy towards a *via media*.¹⁰²⁹ In *Learned Discourse* (1612), which is an exposition of the doctrine of justification, Hooker argued that the ‘righteousness wherein we must be found ... is not our own ... we cannot be justified by any inherent quality ... by faith we are incorporated into Christ’.¹⁰³⁰

These revisionist interpretations have the general support of Tyacke, when he rejects attempts to introduce a conservative English or ‘Anglican’ conception of religious reform that denies the radicalism of the Reformation.¹⁰³¹ MacCulloch also argues that attempts to re-instate a Catholic continuity over the Reformation period and beyond is a myth which fails to take adequate account of the strength of Reformed theology.¹⁰³² In MacCulloch’s view

English theologians wholeheartedly embraced Calvinist ideas ... the developed Calvinist understanding of salvation and the way it is obtained. ... This became the orthodoxy of the English church from the 1560s into the 1620s. ... To realise this is to see the extent of the myth of the English Reformation.¹⁰³³

Hooker, in MacCulloch’s analysis, has been drawn into this myth, ‘seen as a defender of a continuous tradition of thought within the Church of England subsequently labelled Anglicanism’. MacCulloch argues that Hooker had no part in an unbroken tradition.¹⁰³⁴

What are we to make of these irreconcilable analyses? It is of course possible that, in our enthusiasm for theoretical debate, or in our attempts to align Hooker with our own ideological persuasions, we read too much into his intentions, attributing to him motivations that he would not have recognised, let alone acknowledged. In my view it would be more accurate to allow that Hooker was no controversialist except insofar that

¹⁰²⁷ Atkinson, *Hooker*, pp.77-78

¹⁰²⁸ Torrance Kirby, ‘Theory’, p.683

¹⁰²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.700

¹⁰³⁰ Hooker, *Learned Discourse*, p.7

¹⁰³¹ See above, p.64

¹⁰³² See above, p.65

¹⁰³³ MacCulloch, ‘Myth’, p. 11

¹⁰³⁴ *Ibid.*, p.16

his was a measured response to controversy, a debate fuelled by radical pressure from Travers and like-minded disciplinarians. He had no hidden agenda, no intention to revise Reformation dogmatics, he was not inventing any novel stance for his Church, nor did he wish either to denigrate or protect Calvin and his theology, but simply, as Arthur Stephen McGrade suggests, to preserve what he perceived as the self-evident virtues of Elizabeth I's settlement against attack, from whatever source,¹⁰³⁵ and in so doing to secure the Church as by law established.

Nigel Voak, in his study of Hooker's stance in relation to Reformed theology, whilst 'siding heavily with Lake's approach', supports my assertion when he argues that 'whether Hooker was a theologian of the Reformed tradition, or whether he constructed his theology in hostile reaction to Reformed theology, it is now accepted as essential that his views be related to what was the mainstream religious tradition in the England of his day'.¹⁰³⁶ McGrade also maintains that, 'it is truer to his spirit and his text to read him as defending "the present state" of the English Church ... based on unqualified devotion to the establishment as the most perfect arrangement that could possibly be had'.¹⁰³⁷ In Hooker's own words, his intent was,

to set downe this as my finall resolute persuasion; Surely the present forme of Church government which the lawes of this land have established, is such, as no lawe of God, nor reason of man hath hitherto bene alleaged, of force sufficient to prove they do ill.

Thus, in his opposition to Travers and disciplinarian pressures for change, Hooker's resolve was to uphold the Church of England as established in its Reformed orthodoxy, including its doctrines as outlined in the Thirty-Nine Articles. If the radicals wish to undermine the *status quo*, then they must find proof for their case which, in his view, is singularly lacking. Set against his ecclesial persuasion, he notes that

the other which instead of it we are required to accept, is only by error & misconceit named the ordinance of Iesus Christ, no[t] one prooffe [is] yet brought forth, whereby it may clearly appeare to be so in very deede.¹⁰³⁸

What then was the nature of Hooker's dispute with Travers: what were the issues at stake, and to what extent were they divided? Hooker was born in Exeter in 1554, and educated at Exeter Grammar School. He was admitted to Corpus Christi College, Oxford, as a Scholar at the age of thirteen. Having graduated BA in 1573/4 and MA in 1577, he became Fellow there in 1579. Ordained in 1581, he briefly held the Buckinghamshire

¹⁰³⁵ McGrade, 'Foreward', p.xii

¹⁰³⁶ Voak, *Hooker*, pp.10 and 11

¹⁰³⁷ McGrade, 'Introduction', p.xxx

¹⁰³⁸ Hooker, *Ecclesiasticall Politie*, Preface, p.2

living of Drayton Beauchamp before being appointed, in March 1585, to the influential position of Master of the Temple Church, London, where his serious engagement in religious controversy began. It was a contentious appointment, made in preference to Travers, at the time the Deputy Master.¹⁰³⁹ Travers was a Cambridge academic and former Genevan exile, a Puritan who sought to promote Presbyterian Church order,¹⁰⁴⁰ and Hooker's cousin by marriage. He had been ordained in 1578 in Antwerp where he was chaplain to the English Merchant Adventurers. It was not an episcopal ordination but a rite conducted in the Presbyterian custom of the Dutch Calvinist Church, by the laying on of hands by twelve ministers.¹⁰⁴¹ Whilst Travers evidently respected Hooker as 'in truth ... a holy man', he detested his Church polity and differences arose between the two, which, whilst apparently devoid of personal animosity, were intense in controversy.¹⁰⁴² The contest between the two men lasted twelve months, with Hooker preaching his views each Sunday, and Travers responding to his arguments the same day: Canterbury in the morning, Geneva in the afternoon.¹⁰⁴³ Matters came to a head with Hooker asserting, and Travers vehemently denying, on three successive Sundays, that the Roman Catholic Church was an authentic, albeit impure, Church, and that it was possible for papists to be saved in spite of their perceived ignorance of an orthodox understanding of biblical justification.¹⁰⁴⁴ As a consequence Whitgift removed Travers, and in spite of pleas to the contrary, refused to reinstate him, his principal explanation being Travers's refusal to conform and submit himself for authentic ordination in accordance with the laws of the Church of England, the very reason, S.J. Knox argues, why he was not elevated to the Mastership in the first place.¹⁰⁴⁵ Travers refused this requirement, for to do so would be, he considered, a denial not only of his own ordination, but also of the validity of the ordained ministry in other Reformed Churches. Doctrinal opinions were very much to the fore in this dispute. Knox has shown that the fundamental points at issue between Travers and Hooker were not so much ecclesiological as theological, and Williams endorses this view, maintaining that Puritan rejection of most ecclesiastical ceremony and Catholic practice was because they were deemed to be 'directly opposed to essential doctrines about election and grace'.¹⁰⁴⁶ Two accounts of the conflict are provided by the disputants themselves, one in Travers's

¹⁰³⁹ Knox, *Walter Travers*, pp.66-69

¹⁰⁴⁰ Travers was elected Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1567. Expelled, he was exiled in Geneva, 1571-75.

¹⁰⁴¹ Ford, 'Travers'

¹⁰⁴² Knox, *Walter Travers*, p.72

¹⁰⁴³ *Ibid.*, p.73

¹⁰⁴⁴ Travers, *Supplication*, p.13

¹⁰⁴⁵ Knox, *Walter Travers*, p.67

¹⁰⁴⁶ Williams, 'Hooker', p.151

Supplication (1612), and the other, Hooker's *Answer*, posthumously published, probably in response, also in 1612.¹⁰⁴⁷ Among Travers's complaints against his Master was that he 'taught certaine things concerning predestination otherwise then the word of God doth, as it is understood by all churches professing the gospel'. Without making any specific reference to Hooker, Travers had preached the 'truth of such points', and he had also conferred with Hooker directly, urging him, for the peace of the Church, not to trust his own judgement, nor to preach his views without conferring with others and with prayer and study to understand their minds and the will of God.¹⁰⁴⁸ Hooker's answer was to insist that his opinions were not preached in a corner; they were open to all for approval, and were the same as he preached at Paul's Cross, and heard without rebuke or control by the Bishop of London. He challenged Travers's biblical readings, maintaining that, on predestination it was he, Hooker, who taught nothing 'otherwise then the word of God doth', and that he should not be 'understood by the privat interpretation of some one or two men, or by a speciall construction receaved in some few bookes, but as it is understood by all Churches professing the Gospell'.¹⁰⁴⁹ Hooker maintained that God's election to salvation was conditional upon 'his elect beleeving, fearing, and obediently serving him'. Reprobation was established not upon the purpose and counsel of God alone, but based upon his foreknowledge of human unworthiness resulting from rejection,¹⁰⁵⁰ explanations that were a move away from Travers's views and current orthodox Calvinism.

Travers's second objection was that 'this doctrine of his that the assurance of that we believe by the word, is not so certaine, as of that we perceive by sense'. Both publicly and privately, Travers asserted that assurance was based solely upon faith in God's Word, the Scriptures, not upon our reason: 'I ... taught the doctrine otherwise, namely the assurance of faith to be greater, ... and contrarie to all sense and human understanding'.¹⁰⁵¹ Hooker's views on Scripture we shall be examining,¹⁰⁵² but, in his *Answer*, he is adamant that, on this issue, he taught the same as Travers, 'that the things which God doth promise in his word, are surer unto us then anything we touch, handle, or see'.¹⁰⁵³ But how are 'we so sure and certaine of them' except by 'arguments taken from our sensible experience?' We need to be surer of our proof than of the thing proved, God's Word, or else we have no proof at all.

¹⁰⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p.74

¹⁰⁴⁸ Travers, *Supplication*, pp.12-13

¹⁰⁴⁹ Hooker, *Answer*, p.9

¹⁰⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p.27

¹⁰⁵¹ Travers, *Supplication*, p.13

¹⁰⁵² Below, pp.241-244

¹⁰⁵³ Hooker, *Answer*, p.10

Even the strongest in faith, argued Hooker, have always needed to exert the senses, to labour and strive and pray for assurance concerning spiritual things.¹⁰⁵⁴

As for Hooker's declaration, as Travers recorded it, that 'thousands of the fathers, which lived and died in the superstitions of that church, were saved because of their ignorance, which excuseth them', such error, argued Travers, would only serve to 'encourage the ill affected to continue still in their damnable waies, and other[s] weake in the faith to suffer themselves easily to bee seduced to the destruction of their soules'.¹⁰⁵⁵ This argument astonished Hooker; anyone reading such an accusation might well imagine that he 'had at the least denied the Divinitie of Christ'. The sermon referred to had, for the most part, been against popery, and even Travers would have to admit that the Fathers, whilst living in popish superstitions, held to a soundness of essential doctrine, learning, and judgement that even he would be bound to honour.¹⁰⁵⁶

Travers remained *in situ*, if not in office, for some months, and even after he left there remained support for him at the Temple, so that, after five more years, Hooker sought relief from his position being, Keble records, 'weary of the noise and oppositions of this place ... God and nature did not intend me for contentions, but for study and quietness'.¹⁰⁵⁷ Travers, no longer able to exercise his ministry at the Temple, gave himself to the furtherance of the Presbyterian cause, including the compilation, with support and encouragement from his fellow disciplinarians, including Field and Cartwright, of a Presbyterian textbook.¹⁰⁵⁸ We have already mentioned Travers's pamphlet entitled *Disciplina Ecclesiae*, which was contemporaneously regarded as a definitive statement of Presbyterian Church discipline. It was never printed in its original form, and is extant only in five unidentical manuscripts. It is a revision of a 'Booke of Discipline' compiled by some unnamed person or persons.¹⁰⁵⁹ An English translation of Travers's work entitled the *Directory of Church-government*, a twenty-four page document, sometimes attributed to Cartwright, and evidently found in his study after his death, was published in 1644/5, during sessions of the Westminster Assembly. The pamphlet contains arrangements for the calling and election of ministers and orders regarding preaching responsibilities, including

¹⁰⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵⁵ Travers, *Supplication*, pp.13-14

¹⁰⁵⁶ Hooker, *Answers*, p.25

¹⁰⁵⁷ Richard Hooker, quoted in Keble, 'Life', p.66. Original source not given.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Knox, *Walter Travers*, pp.98-99

¹⁰⁵⁹ [Walter Travers], *Disciplina Ecclesiae Dei Verbo Descripta* (1587). The work was not published. The five unidentical extant manuscripts were produced anonymously, but are widely attributed to Travers. The manuscripts are to be found in: Lambeth Palace Library, London. MS. CXIII, No. 10, ff. 180-86; British Library, Harleian MS.7029, ff. 115-26; Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS. C.C.C.294; and two in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin, D.3 12, f.62; and D.3, 12, f.69: Knox, *Walter Travers*, pp.96 and 101-102

the preparation of two sermons for every Sunday. 'There is no set liturgy, although details of what should be included in the prayers are given. 'These include a confession of sin, 'both originall and actuall'.¹⁰⁶⁰ The prayer following the sermon asks for 'grace to profit by the doctrine delivered, the principall heads thereof being remembered'.¹⁰⁶¹ As for a liturgy, ministers are advised to use 'the most commodious forme thereof ... which is used by the Churches that have reformed their Discipline according to the Word of God'.¹⁰⁶² Details are listed for the appointment of elders, the application of Church discipline, and arrangements for church assemblies, conferences and synods. Finally, the wording of the required subscription is stipulated. The whole presents itself as a stark example of Presbyterian worship devoid of any aesthetic expression of religious devotion, a service of edification centred on the preacher and his exposition of biblical teaching, worship appealing to the mind and the will rather than the passions and the heart.

Hooker's dispute with Travers motivated him to examine his position in the light of radical Puritan arguments and to record his conclusions in *Laves*. In this eight volume polemical work, which Avis maintains was 'couched in a vein of studied moderation, calm reasonableness and unfeigned charity',¹⁰⁶³ Hooker recognises 'the wonderful zeale ... wherewith ye [the disciplinarians] have withstood the received orders of this Church, [which] was the first thing which caused me to enter into consideration'.¹⁰⁶⁴ The first four volumes were published in 1592/3, subsidised by Edwin Sandys (Jr.) (1561-1629), Hooker's former pupil at Oxford and son of Edwin, Archbishop of York (1577-88).¹⁰⁶⁵ The fifth — and largest — book was not published until 1597, whilst the remaining three were the subject of legal wrangles after Hooker's death in 1600. As a result, Books Six and Eight did not appear until 1648, and Book Seven in 1662. There has been some doubt about the authenticity of these last three.¹⁰⁶⁶ Just how much support was given to Hooker by Whitgift in this enterprise is a matter of debate, but it is noteworthy that the early volumes of the *Laves* were registered with the Stationers' Company in January 1592/3, just two months before measures were introduced in Parliament that would lead to the passing of the Elizabethan Conventicle Act, brought against Catholic recusants and Protestant sectaries.¹⁰⁶⁷

¹⁰⁶⁰ [Travers] *Directory*, A7

¹⁰⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶² *Ibid.*, B2

¹⁰⁶³ Avis, *Anglicanism*, p.47

¹⁰⁶⁴ Hooker, *Ecclesiasticall Politie*, Preface, p.1

¹⁰⁶⁵ Booty, 'Hooker', pp.6-7

¹⁰⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p.8

¹⁰⁶⁷ Collinson, 'Establishment', p.165

Travers, in his opposition to Hooker, had voiced the Puritan agenda within the Elizabethan Church towards the end of the sixteenth century. In response *Lawes* was written ‘to them that seeke ... the reformation of Lawes, and orders Ecclesiasticall, in the Church of England’¹⁰⁶⁸, that is to the Puritan advocates of what they understood to be the need for further purification of the Church, away from its alleged Romish practices, and towards a Presbyterian Church order. In so doing Hooker was siding with Whitgift, not only against Travers, but also against the Puritan authors of the 1572 *Admonition*, and its defender, Cartwright. Hooker followed this lengthy *Admonition* controversy closely in his work, especially in Book Five.¹⁰⁶⁹

The first known written response to the *Lawes* was the anonymous tract, *A Christian Letter* (1599), the only work, in its day and ours according to John E. Booty, entirely devoted to its refutation.¹⁰⁷⁰ In the Library at Hooker’s Oxford college there is a copy of this document containing marginal notes in Hooker’s handwriting, annotations that were possibly made in preparation for a reply.¹⁰⁷¹ Styling themselves as ‘English Protestants, unfayned favourers of the present state of religion’ — that is, the true upholders of the Reformation in the English Church — the author(s) complained that Hooker had called into question the doctrines of the Reformation as set forth in the Articles of the Church of England.¹⁰⁷² As he/they saw it, whilst Hooker was masquerading as a Reformed theologian,

it seemed unto us that covertlie and underhand you did bende all your skill ... against the present state of our English church ... to make questionable and bring into contempt the doctrine and faith itself.¹⁰⁷³

The accusation was that under the pretext of ‘inveighing against Puritaines’, Hooker was covertly advocating the ‘chiefest points of popish blasphemy’.¹⁰⁷⁴ Not only that, he was allegedly placing far too much reliance on reason, philosophy and medieval thought, considering the ‘bookes of holy scripture to bee at least of no greater moment than *Aristotle*

¹⁰⁶⁸ Hooker, *Works*, I, p.1

¹⁰⁶⁹ Collinson, ‘Establishment’, p.168

¹⁰⁷⁰ Anon., *Christian Letter*. Hooker, *Works*, IV, p.xiii. Booty — the sub-editor of Hooker, *Works*, IV, — argues that *A Christian Letter* was published ‘anonymously and without official permission by Richard Schilders at Middleburgh in the Lowlands’. The identification of Schilders is ‘based on typefaces and ornaments’, p.xxv. Booty raises the possibility that the principal author was Andrew Willet, a strongly anti-Roman Catholic Calvinist, but a loyal member of the Church of England, pp.xix-xxv

¹⁰⁷¹ CCCL, MS 215b

¹⁰⁷² ‘The articles of religion sett forth Anno Domini 1562’: Anon., *Christian Letter*, p.9. Essentially, the Thirty-Nine Articles of 1563.

¹⁰⁷³ Anon., *Christian Letter*, p.4

¹⁰⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

and the Schoolmen'.¹⁰⁷⁵ He was placing too great a reliance on natural knowledge and upon mankind's capacity to reason.¹⁰⁷⁶

In all your discourse ... *Aristotle* the patriarch of Philosophers (with divers other humane writers) and the ingenuous schoolmen, in all points have some finger; Reason is highlie set up against holie scripture, and reading against preaching; the church of Rome favourable admitted to be of the house of God.¹⁰⁷⁷

In short, argued his accusers, Hooker's doctrinal stance was questionable; his book left 'almost all the principall pointes of our English creede, greatly shaken and contradicted'.¹⁰⁷⁸ Hooker, whose reliance upon Scripture was paramount and whose purpose was to defend and uphold the tenets of the English Church, denied these charges, insisting that by consulting the learning of past ages he was not rejecting Scripture's authority, but following the example of the Reformers, Calvin included. Hooker was certainly well versed in ancient and medieval philosophic thinking, but he was above all a theologian. As Atkinson points out, whilst Hooker was 'indebted to ... humanistic scholarship and endeavour [as was Calvin] ... he used their scholarship in furtherance of his theological convictions, a practice employed by all the Reformers'.¹⁰⁷⁹ In a study examining not how Calvin was influenced by his predecessors, but how he viewed them, Anthony Lane shows that, in response to the charge that 'Protestants despised antiquity ... Calvin revealed himself as one who diligently studied the early fathers'.¹⁰⁸⁰ 'Calvin's respect for the fathers was great, but not unqualified ... The Scriptures are the only infallible norm and the teaching of the fathers is to be judged in the light of Scripture'.¹⁰⁸¹ The Reformation, after all, was not a new start in which past thought is rejected, but a continuing process, having vital links with the past and, as Irena Backus maintains, any suggestion that the Reformers discounted patristic writing is 'very far from being the case'. This, she claims, includes Luther, Zwingli, Beza, and Calvin, who argued 'that the doctrines of the Fathers [were] also those of the Reformers'.¹⁰⁸² McGrath additionally asserts that Calvin, along with the magisterial reformers, saw the Church as continuing, yet in need of reforming, this in opposition to the radicals, who saw the 'Reformation' as a new start; for them 'there was no church to reform'. Set against this radical contention was the conviction that, whilst the Church required an essential purgation and reformation, 'yet [it was] a church Christ had never abandoned'. Thus, 'as

¹⁰⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p.68

¹⁰⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p.11

¹⁰⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p.43

¹⁰⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p.43

¹⁰⁷⁹ Atkinson, *Hooker*, p.11. Calvin was not averse to citing the Schoolmen: Calvin, *Institutes*, I, p.181

¹⁰⁸⁰ Lane, *Calvin*, pp.15 and 26

¹⁰⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp.35-36

¹⁰⁸² Backus, 'Early Church', pp.292-294

the writings of the magisterial Reformation make clear ... tradition is allocated a positive and critical role as a servant in the interpretation and application of Scripture'.¹⁰⁸³ That was the position that Hooker advocated and, in like manner, when referring to the writings of Calvin, he maintained that whilst he was a very great theologian he also cannot go unquestioned.

What was Hooker's purpose in producing the *Laws*? In my view Hooker's intent was to refute the Puritan complaint, voiced in the controversy between Cartwright and Whitgift, and by Travers at the Temple Church, that he and the English Church, in its form then established, had deviated from Reformation doctrine and practice. In the *Laws*, he defended the Church's position, not in an effort to prevent further moves towards reform, but because, in his view, it was already sufficiently Reformed in its doctrine and practice. He insisted that whilst he was not a slavish follower of Geneva, he was at one with Puritans in wishing to hold to the underlying principles of Reformed teaching on issues such as justification, election, the relationship between faith and works, Scripture and the nature of the Church.

Thus, Owen Chadwick can maintain: 'Hooker, for all his knowledge of Aristotle and St Thomas Aquinas, and for all his desire to controvert Calvinism, [was] an unmistakable disciple (though not an uncritical disciple) of Swiss Reformed thought'.¹⁰⁸⁴ His contemporaries might argue to the contrary, but Hooker's purpose was to embrace, not distort, the truth, and that meant Reformed truth. Hooker endorsed the Reformation, which, in the providence of God, had come 'when the ruins of the house of God ... were become ... in the eyes of the world so exceeding great, that verie superstition began even to feele it selfe too far grown'.¹⁰⁸⁵ Whilst maintaining his independence on things indifferent, he acknowledged his admiration for Calvin— 'for mine owne part, I thinke incomparably the wisest man that ever the french Church did enjoy'.¹⁰⁸⁶ Indeed, his 'paynes in composing the Institutions of Christian Religion, ... [and his] industrious travailes for exposition of holy Scripture' 'have deservedly procured him honour throughout the world'.¹⁰⁸⁷ But, Hooker refused to idolise him.¹⁰⁸⁸ Calvin was great, he agreed, but fallible, 'blemished with the staine of humaine frailtie'.¹⁰⁸⁹

¹⁰⁸³ McGrath, 'Engaging Tradition', pp.144-146, 152, and 154

¹⁰⁸⁴ Chadwick, *Spirit*, p.8

¹⁰⁸⁵ Hooker, *Works*, I, p.343

¹⁰⁸⁶ Hooker, *Ecclesiasticall Politie*, Preface, p.3

¹⁰⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, Preface, p.9

¹⁰⁸⁸ Avis, *Anglicanism*, pp.53-54

¹⁰⁸⁹ Hooker, *Works*, I, p.27

Where he differed from the radical Puritans was in his perception of what essentially constituted Reformed truth. To be a Reformed Church does not require acceptance of the Genevan line without question. It is not essential 'that all Christian Churches are bound in every indifferent ceremonie to be uniforme ... there are divers kinds of equall goodnesse'.¹⁰⁹⁰ In the *Laves*, Hooker lays a foundation for his arguments in his understanding of Reason and Scripture. It is these issues I wish now to examine more closely for, I suggest, it was as his opinions focused on these topics that Hooker proved to be the most contentious. It was the disagreement arising over their respective understandings of the place of Reason and Scripture in humanity's search for spiritual reality that is at the heart of the disunion.

Hooker's proposition was that the Universe is governed by laws which 'God ... himselfe ... hath set down as expedient to be kept by all his creatures'. These include the 'law of reason ... which bindeth creatures reasonable in this world'.¹⁰⁹¹ From this law arise 'principles universally agreed upon', self-evidently true, so that 'the greatest morall duties we owe towards God or man, may without difficultie be concluded'.¹⁰⁹² These principles are available to the whole human race. After all, in our understanding of truth, are we to be considered 'rawe in wit and judgment; as if reason were an enemy unto religion'?¹⁰⁹³ There is truth that men and women are able to discover without an indispensable recourse to Scripture, and they are answerable for their response to the light of Reason. That Hooker was not saying anything different to Calvin here is evident from the *Institutes*, where Calvin maintained that 'our wisdom, in so far as it ought to be deemed true ... consists ... of two parts: the knowledge of God and ourselves'.¹⁰⁹⁴ In spite of the effect of the Fall, to

charge the intellect with perpetual blindness so as to leave it no intelligence ... is repugnant not only to the Word of God, but to common experience. We see that there has been implanted in the human mind a certain desire of investigative truth, to which it never would aspire unless some relish for truth antecedently existed. ... man's efforts are not always so utterly fruitless as not to lead to some result especially when his attention is directed to inferior objects. Nay, even with regard to superior objects ... he makes some little progress.¹⁰⁹⁵

Calvin maintained that, in the contemplation of even 'superior objects', Reason has effective, albeit incomplete, competence. But, both he and Hooker insisted that Reason is incapable of achieving a full understanding of those things necessary to salvation. This is

¹⁰⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.332 and 333

¹⁰⁹¹ Hooker, *Works*, I, p.63

¹⁰⁹² *Ibid.*, p.91

¹⁰⁹³ Hooker, *Ecclesiasticall Politie*, p.139

¹⁰⁹⁴ Calvin, *Institutes*, I, p.37

¹⁰⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.234

the essential place for Revelation, which Hooker dealt with when exploring the role of Scripture.

When we come to Hooker's view of Scripture, his Puritan detractors were insistent that he failed to accord with a truly Reformed approach to the Bible.¹⁰⁹⁶ This Hooker denied, maintaining that 'I think of the scripture of God as reverently as the best of the purified crew ... In which mind I hope by the grace of almighty God that I shall both live and die'.¹⁰⁹⁷ Against him, the Puritan approach was expressed in the *Admonition*, which had as its aim the

bringing in and placing in Gods church those things *only*, which the Lord himself in his word commandeth. ... that nothing be don in this or ani other thing, but that which you have expresse warrant of Gods worde for.¹⁰⁹⁸

Biblical authority is required for anything and everything within the Church and life, and it is a position that springs from the Puritan understanding of the Fall. Reason has become so wholly depraved that divine revelation becomes essential, and Scripture alone provides it. Hooker was aware of this approach when he directed his Second Book against those who maintain 'that Scripture is the onely rule of all things which in this life may be done by men'.¹⁰⁹⁹ He maintained:

Two opinions there are concerning sufficiency of Holy Scripture, each extremely opposite unto the other, and both repugnant unto truth. The schools of Rome teach Scripture to be so insufficient, as if, except traditions were added, it did not contain all revealed and supernatural truth, which is absolutely necessary for the children of men in this life to know that they may in the next be saved. Others justly condemning this opinion grow likewise unto a dangerous extremity, as if Scripture did not only contain all things in that kind necessary, but all things simply, and in such sort that to do any thing according to any other law were not only unnecessary but even opposite unto salvation, unlawful and sinful.¹¹⁰⁰

But, as John declares in his gospel, 'these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is Christ the Son of God, and that in believing ye might have life through His Name', and as Paul advised Timothy, 'the Holy Scriptures are able to make thee wise unto salvation'.¹¹⁰¹ That is seen by Hooker as the essential purpose of the Bible, to bring mankind back to a relationship with its Creator. Hooker took it further when he denied that 'in Scripture there must be of necessitie ... a forme of Church polite'.¹¹⁰² The Puritans relied heavily upon the

¹⁰⁹⁶ Anon., *Christian Letter*, pp.11-17

¹⁰⁹⁷ 'Hooker's Autograph Notes' in Hooker, *Works*, IV, p.68

¹⁰⁹⁸ Field and Wilcox, *Admonition*, pp.8 and 15. Italics mine.

¹⁰⁹⁹ Hooker, *Works*, I, p.143

¹¹⁰⁰ Hooker, *Ecclesiasticall Politie*, II, Ch. viii, 7, cited by More and Cross, *Anglicanism*, p.89

¹¹⁰¹ Hooker, *Ecclesiasticall Politie*, I, Ch. xiv. 1 and 4, quoting John 20: 31 and II Timothy 3: 15, cited by More and Cross, *Anglicanism*, pp.89-90

¹¹⁰² Hooker, *Works*, I, p.193

actions of the primitive Church as recorded particularly in the *Acts of the Apostles*, and the forms of Church government that they discerned there. But the early Church was as fallible as any other. The Biblical record of their actions is narrative, not teaching, and Scripture is faithful in the account of all their activities, including their errors of judgement. It is specific instruction, not the actions of the apostolic Church, which should be followed, and where Scripture remains silent in its teaching, the Church must exercise its discretion. 'Sundry things may be done in the Church, so as they be not done against the Scripture, although no Scripture do command them, but the Church only following the light of reason judge them to be in discretion meet'.¹¹⁰³ 'This allows Hooker', Williams argues, 'to reject the idea that there could be a simple ... God-given church discipline set down once for all in the Bible. God guides the decisions of the Church'.¹¹⁰⁴ Hooker enlists Calvin in support: 'the judgement of Calvin ... be plaine, that for Ceremonies and externall discipline the Church hath power to make lawes'.¹¹⁰⁵ Not only is Reason competent where Scripture is silent, it is also plain that Reason is essential in the interpretation of Scripture: 'between true and false construction, the difference reason must show'.¹¹⁰⁶ As Robert Rae describes it,

Hooker's attitude to scripture was deeply nuanced by reason. He made reason the criterion of reading scripture. Not, you note, the criterion of scripture, but of reading scripture. Hooker really did hold scripture in first place. He held reason necessary for the understanding and application of scripture in all the areas in which scripture might be applied.¹¹⁰⁷

Without the exercise of this God-given capacity, our minds would be blinded to the truths of divine Revelation. Hillerdal argues that Hooker was 'fighting all tendencies to regard ... Scripture as the self-evident ... word of God which does not need reason for its proper understanding and interpretation'.¹¹⁰⁸ McGrade supports that argument. In the *Lanes*, he notes,

reason is defended as not only presupposed for an accurate understanding of Scripture, but as competent to determine a broad range of issues not ... covered in Scripture.¹¹⁰⁹

In their particular understanding of the Fall and of Scripture, his critics claimed that they were expressing the Genevan Reformed position, and that, by implication, in his

¹¹⁰³ Hooker, *Ecclesiasticall Politie*, p.137

¹¹⁰⁴ Williams, 'Hooker', p.151

¹¹⁰⁵ Hooker, *Ecclesiasticall Politie*, p.160

¹¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p.146

¹¹⁰⁷ Rae, 'Hooker'

¹¹⁰⁸ Hillerdahl, *Hooker*, p.23

¹¹⁰⁹ McGrade, 'Reason', p.115

disagreement with the Puritans, Hooker fell foul of that position. Atkinson, an advocate of Hooker's Reformed standing, rejects their argument; he maintains that, on the contrary, 'Hooker's view of the fall was impeccably orthodox'.¹¹¹⁰ He further argues that it is untrue to suggest that Calvin subscribed to the view that Scripture was 'omnicompetent'. That may have been the radical Puritan position, but it was not Calvin's:

Calvin held to Scripture where it spoke but was otherwise content to follow reason or tradition. ... By wrenching the Reformed view of the fall out of its proper context these Puritans were constrained to enlarge the use of Scripture beyond its proper bounds.¹¹¹¹

Returning to Hooker, his position in relation to Scripture is clear:

The testimonies of God are true, ... are perfect, ... are all sufficient unto the end for which they were given.¹¹¹²

In every respect, Scripture ever has the over-arching pre-eminence:

Although ten thousand general Councils would set down one and the same definitive sentence concerning any point of religion whatsoever; yet ... one manifest testimony cited from the mouth of God himself to the contrary, could not ... but overweigh them all; in as much as for them to have been deceived it is not impossible.¹¹¹³

The purpose for which Scripture is given is to provide 'a full instruction in all things unto salvation necessary, the knowledge whereof man by nature could not otherwise in this life attaine unto'.¹¹¹⁴ Hooker's issue with the radicals was that, by insisting that 'in scripture all things lawfull to be done must needes be contained', they were 'side racking and stretching it further then by [God] was meant'. This would be an intolerable burden, bringing 'the simple a thousand times to their wits end'.¹¹¹⁵ Hooker followed Calvin, who argued that

there are some who deny that any commonwealth is rightly framed which neglects the law of Moses, and is ruled by the common law of nations. How perilous and seditious are these views ... for me it is enough to demonstrate that they are stupid and false.¹¹¹⁶

Our understanding of Hooker's views on Scripture is an issue that retains its relevance for our own day. Harper maintains that the 'arguments and understandings [on Holy Scripture] developed by Hooker in his day remain essential now to exploration of the

¹¹¹⁰ Atkinson, *Hooker*, p.79

¹¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹² Hooker, *Ecclesiasticall Politie*, p.121

¹¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p.116

¹¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.121

¹¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.122

¹¹¹⁶ Calvin, *Institutes*, II, p.663

scriptural dimensions of the current disputes amongst Anglicans'.¹¹¹⁷ In the application of Hooker's arguments to contemporary hermeneutics, Harper claims that he highlights an essential difference between 'direct oracles of God' in Scripture, which have universal application, and utterances, or 'by-speeches', which form part of the biblical narrative, and which apply to the historical context in which they are set, not necessarily for all time. 'To distinguish between them,' he argues, 'one has to apply reason as Paul himself did in the interpretation and application of Hebrew Scriptures'.¹¹¹⁸ This is an argument that is fraught with difficulty, and has far from universal acceptance. It is nevertheless noticeable how there often arises in current ecclesial disputes the argument that recent developments in the Anglican Church are a denial of its Reformed standing, and the insistence that it is they, the objectors, who alone represent the historic doctrines of the Church of England formularies and Scripture, an argument which is as strongly denied by those they accuse. Each side continues to insist that it is they who adhere faithfully both to revealed truth and to Anglican tradition.

It is perhaps surprising that there should ever have been a view that maintains that, at any time, there has been a specifically 'Anglican' position, whether it be Catholic, Reformed, middle way, or any other emphasis. Theologians might claim that it is they who are articulating the authentic Anglican tradition, but when, since the middle of the sixteenth century, has there been a unified Anglican perspective that speaks for a consensus of those who adhere to the national Church in England? It is, and has been, a broad Church, permitting, if not encouraging, a wide divergence of views within generous and ill-defined boundaries. The Church of England has its Articles of Religion to which its clergy must give assent, yet it has taken a broad approach to doctrine and practice in the pursuit of tolerance and in an endeavour to prevent fragmentation. Unity cannot be imposed; efforts to create a uniform Church, either by ecclesiastical pressure or statute were, and are, doomed to failure: such ventures only cause further division when attempted. Acts of Uniformity unify nothing, nor, unfortunately, do the decisions of Synods. Uniformity has to be accepted where it is present, and disunity recognised — and wept over — where it is not. Wherever possible, divergent distinctions have to be accommodated.

As for Hooker, I maintain that he was not advocating any party line, nor was he seeking to establish an 'Anglican' middle-way Church. He was expressing his own conservative approach to Church polity, carved out in a studious response to accusations from Travers

¹¹¹⁷ Harper, 'Contemporary Anglicanism', p.1. Harper argues that Hooker's understanding has particular contemporary relevance to 'the debate within Anglicanism on the place of homosexuality in human society.'

¹¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.4

and his associates that he and the Church had reneged on Reformation principles, including dogmas propounded by Calvin. As he saw it, neither he nor the Church had deviated from Reformation doctrine, rightly understood. If Hooker was steering a middle course, then it was between Rome and the form of Puritanism typified by Travers and Cartwright. For Hooker, the Church of England adhered to the Reformation and it was the Puritan Presbyterians who were the deviants. If Hooker was establishing anything, then he was, probably unwittingly, opening up possibilities that would make a broad approach within the Church of England possible. In the event, for all their radicalism, neither Travers nor Cartwright separated from the national Church, and Cartwright maintained his defence of the established religion against separatism.¹¹¹⁹ If this unity, retained by those holding divergent opinions, is a consequence of Hooker's influence, and constitutes 'Anglicanism', then he could well have been the prime cause.

The situation in the sixteenth-century English Church is not without relevance to the Established Church in England today. Some churches on the Evangelical wing prefer to call their incumbents presbyters, or ministers, men and women who claim that their authority rests in their direct calling from God and their adherence to Biblical doctrine, a calling recognised and authorised by their ministerial peers. At the same time, Anglo-Catholic Churches will adhere to the view that the Church, and its priests, have authority vested in them and validated only by an Episcopate in 'apostolic succession'. Neither position is the view of the Anglican Church as a whole; both views are part of the broad spectrum of Anglican tradition, and either position, if it were to become required doctrine in the Church of England, would divide it. Each is able to live with the other, either by turning a blind-eye, or by claiming that they disagree only on 'things indifferent', provided the alternative view is not imposed upon them. This broad Church outlook has, as Anglicans well appreciate, both its inherent advantages and weaknesses.

The issues debated four hundred years ago might seem unimportant to us now, but, in defending certain

rites and orders in the Church of Englande, as marrying with a ring, crossing in the one Sacrament, kneeling at the other, observing of festivall dayes moe then onely that which is called the Lordes day,¹¹²⁰

Hooker was upholding the principle that the Church can permit diverse convictions on things indifferent without contravening God's revealed will in Scripture. The Reformation was not about rings, crossings, kneeling, and a Church calendar, nor even about episcopacy

¹¹¹⁹ See below, pp.283-286

¹¹²⁰ Hooker, *Works*, I, p.214

and forms of liturgy, but about responding to God's will where it is revealed. Where Scripture speaks clearly, it is to be followed, but many things are left to the Church's discretion, which in no way impinges upon the honour that the Church yields to the perfection of Scripture.¹¹²¹ The Church, and the individual, needed to be protected from a narrow interpretation of Scripture, which is what Hooker sought to do, and as he did so he was to carve out for the Church a policy in which its adherents were not required to be followers of a contracted doctrinal norm. Hooker was not going to be pushed into a mould. In the event, his resistance became a Church characteristic, and the Church of England has not been confined to any mould ever since. In his time it was a pattern that was yet able to retain within it the equally insistent views of Travers, his colleague Cartwright, and, as we shall now see, the Cambridge expositor, Perkins. And so the Church was to remain, at least until the events of the middle years of the next century.

c. Lancelot Andrewes and William Perkins

If not by Scriptures, how can we be sure, [Replied the Panther] what tradition's pure?
John Dryden (1631-1700)¹¹²²

Finally, we turn to two major contributors to the religious scene in the English national Church at the end of the sixteenth century: Conformist, Lancelot Andrewes, and Puritan, William Perkins, both of whom remained faithful in their commitment to the Church of England until their deaths despite holding to religious persuasions at the opposite extremes of an ideological spectrum. There appears to be no reason to suppose that they came into direct conflict with each other, but this could conceivably be because, given the nature of their immense but diverse contributions to the devotional and doctrinal ethos of the Church, the paths of these two Cambridge-educated clerics would rarely have crossed. In spite of their shared Christian faith in its essentials, there were tensions in their ideology that kept them apart, but none were rendered sufficient to cause them to become separated.

This detachment might not always have been the case had they both maintained their early scholarly associations at Cambridge. Andrewes gained a scholarship from Merchant Taylors' School to Pembroke College which he entered in 1571, a college whose ethos had been inherited from such Masters as Grindal and — albeit only for three months — Whitgift. He graduated BA in 1575 with his MA following in 1578, gaining in the process a

¹¹²¹ *Ibid.*, pp.212-213

¹¹²² Dryden, 'Hind and Panther', II, p.119

reputation as a brilliant linguist, an academic aptitude that was later to be recognised and utilised to the full with his involvement in the translation and production of the 1611 'King James' Bible. He was ordained deacon and priest in 1580 by William Chaderton (*d.* 1608), then Bishop of Chester, himself a Pembroke man who was also made a fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge, in 1558. William Chaderton is not to be confused with Laurence Chaderton (1536?–1640), 'the pope of Cambridge puritanism',¹¹²³ later to become, in 1584, the first Master of the new Puritan foundation of Emmanuel College and one of the Puritan representatives at the Hampton Court Conference. Laurence Chaderton was a great friend of Perkins as well as his mentor and tutor at the self-same Christ's College when Perkins was enrolled as a pensioner in 1577. There Perkins graduated BA in 1581 and proceeded MA in 1584.¹¹²⁴

Andrewes, in later years, was to become a friend and theological associate of Hooker, playing an important role in the protection and posthumous publication of Hooker's works,¹¹²⁵ providing, Lake maintains, a personal as well as an ideological link between Hooker and Laud.¹¹²⁶ In his early years he demonstrated an inclination towards moderate Puritanism, his early patron being Sir Francis Walsingham (*c.*1532-1590), a prominent Puritan at Court, who arranged for Andrewes to receive his scholarship to Pembroke Hall. At Cambridge he participated in Puritan 'prophesyings' attended by Laurence Chaderton, Culverwell, John Knewstub (1544-1624) — another of the Puritan spokesmen at the Hampton Court Conference — and John Carter (1554-1635), later to become a prominent Suffolk Puritan.¹¹²⁷ Knappen maintains that it is

fair to conclude that until the late fifteen-eighties [Andrewes's] attitude was that of a moderate Puritan. Not until he was well past his thirtieth year, when he accepted the favour of Whitgift and the Queen ... can he be said to have separated from the Puritan party, [so that, in later years] the young radical had indeed become the old conservative.¹¹²⁸

This assertion is countered by Marianne Dorman in her extensive study of Andrewes as a 'Mentor of Reformed Catholicism', in which she promotes the view that his theology 'hardly changed from his catechist days at Pembroke Chapel ... in the late 1570's to the end of his life'.¹¹²⁹ Dorman's contribution and opinions we are about to examine, but she

¹¹²³ Collinson, *Puritan Movement*, p.125

¹¹²⁴ McCullough, 'Andrewes', Jinkins, 'Perkins', Collinson, 'Laurence Chaderton', and Patterson, 'Perkins', p.253

¹¹²⁵ Gibbs, 'Priestly Absolution', p.262

¹¹²⁶ Lake, 'Avant-garde Conformity', p.114

¹¹²⁷ Knappen, 'Early Puritanism', pp.96-97, and Tyacke, 'Andrewes', p.9

¹¹²⁸ Knappen, 'Early Puritanism', pp.98 and 104

¹¹²⁹ Dorman, *Lancelot Andrewes*, p.1

does acknowledge, albeit only in a brief endnote, that there are historians, such as Tyacke, who disagree with her regarding Andrewes's early theological opinions.¹¹³⁰

Whilst, in the view of many historians, Andrewes came to modify his stance with the passage of time, Perkins, by comparison, was to retain his firm, yet moderate, Puritan convictions to the end. Wallace maintains that Perkins 'was a major influence in shaping Puritan thought and the agenda of Reformed theology for the ensuing century',¹¹³¹ a view with which J.I. Packer, an undoubted admirer, agrees: 'we should call William Perkins the Father of Puritanism, for it was he more than anyone else who crystallised and delimited the essence of mainstream Puritan Christianity for the next hundred years'.¹¹³² Packer is puzzled by the current lack of published interest in this divine, except, that is, amongst a small circle of professional historians and theologians, given his renown as 'the best-known and best-selling English' author of popular Christian books between 1585 and 1635. 'Few men', Thomas F. Merrill records, 'have been as famous and influential in their own day only to have their reputations dissolve into near oblivion'.¹¹³³ Haller maintains that 'no books ... were more often to be found upon the shelves of succeeding generations of preachers, and the name of no preacher recurs more often in later Puritan literature'.¹¹³⁴ His works were published in three large volumes between 1616 and 1618,¹¹³⁵ several editions appearing in the same century, the last in 1688. The Courtenay Library of Reformation Classics published a collection of his work in 1970 under the editorship of Ian Breward, a selection intended to illustrate the range of his activity and the structure of his divinity, proposing thereby to demonstrate the reasons for his reputation amongst his contemporaries.

Having been elected to a fellowship at Christ's College in 1584 Perkins was appointed as lecturer at Great St. Andrew's, a city-centre church situated in the vicinity of Pembroke, Emmanuel and Christ's Colleges where he remained until his death in 1602, leaving for posterity some fifty works on a variety of topics including theology, spirituality, ethics and biblical exposition.¹¹³⁶ Puritan though he was, Perkins was nonetheless a 'conformist' in the sense that he endorsed the Calvinist consensus of the time whilst accepting the ecclesiastical structure of the Church: he opposed separation. As for his moderation, Lake argues that 'the core of the moderate puritan position lay neither in the puritan critique of

¹¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, end note 4

¹¹³¹ Wallace, 'Polemical divinity', p.209

¹¹³² Packer, *Perkins*, p.3

¹¹³³ Merrill, *Perkins*, p.ix

¹¹³⁴ Haller, *Rise*, p.65, cited in Herbert, 'Perkins', p.7

¹¹³⁵ Perkins, *Workes*

¹¹³⁶ Packer, *Perkins*, p.3

the liturgy and polity of the church nor in a formal doctrinal consensus', but 'in the capacity, which the godly claimed, of being able to recognize one another in the midst of a corrupt and unregenerate world', criteria which, whilst Lake doesn't include him, amply describe Perkins's spirit.¹¹³⁷ I agree with Lake on this point: Perkins remained prepared to distinguish in others their Christian spirituality, whilst retaining his strong Bezan Calvinist emphasis in theology and preaching.¹¹³⁸ In so doing, he 'helped establish the boundaries for a moderate churchmanship that rejected the extremes of separatism and nonconformism'.¹¹³⁹

Perkins was a strong critic of the Roman Church, its doctrines, practices and hierarchy, as can be seen in his extended exposé in *Treatise tending* (1590).¹¹⁴⁰ His reputation was in his day probably greater, Rosemary A. Sissons argues, and more widespread than that of Hooker. Breward notes that there is a 'tendency to see Hooker as *the* theologian of the Elizabethan church despite the fact that his *Ecclesiastical Polity* was a worst seller and appears scarcely to have been noticed until later in the seventeenth century'.¹¹⁴¹ But Perkins's fame was extensive: he was held in high regard by the 'Anglican' community, and his work was 'considered as authoritative commentary on virtually every phase of the Christian life'. He was, Merrill argues, 'the most famous and influential spokesman for Calvinism of his day' whilst being, at the same time, as powerful an apologist in support of the Church of England as was Hooker.¹¹⁴² W.B. Patterson supports this view in an article in which he contends that Perkins was the

most prominent English theologian of his day ... [and] that his career was devoted not to bringing about changes in the Established Church but to making that Church's teachings better known and appreciated. Perkins should be seen as a leading apologist for the Elizabethan Church of England.¹¹⁴³

Further, whilst acknowledging that the term "Puritan" is notoriously difficult to define', Patterson maintains that in his attitude to the need for changes in the liturgy, polity and discipline of the Church of England, 'there is little in Perkins's career or in his writings to qualify him' in that category. Against that argument, as we have seen, Packer's definition

¹¹³⁷ Lake, *Moderate Puritans*, p.282

¹¹³⁸ Kendall argues that Perkins held the mistaken view that Beza's views were essentially Calvin's: Kendall, *Calvin*, p.55

¹¹³⁹ Jinkins, 'Perkins'

¹¹⁴⁰ Perkins, *Treatise*, pp.195-236

¹¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p.15

¹¹⁴² Sissons, 'Perkins, Apologist', p.495 and Merrill, *Perkins*, p.ix

¹¹⁴³ Patterson, 'Perkins', p.252

sees Perkins as a prime example: the ‘Father of Puritanism’.¹¹⁴⁴ Certainly Perkins’s commitment to Puritan Reformed theology was robust.

Leif Dixon demonstrates, in an article in which he explores Perkins’s relationship to ‘atheism’ — in the sixteenth-century context — how Perkins held as a fundamental premise the all-embracing consequences of the Fall. Mankind’s depravity was absolute. In our perception of God, human understanding must be obliterated; believers must of necessity ‘shut up [their] eies, and simply without any more adoe trust God upon his bare and naked word, & suffer [themselves] to be ledde by it.’¹¹⁴⁵ ‘His narrow fideism,’ argues Dixon, ‘in ignoring the many and varied rational and textual critiques of this position, made his stance simultaneously impregnable and deeply vulnerable, for the whole edifice of his thought and emotion rested upon a single loud message that, if wrong, would explode everything else as well.’¹¹⁴⁶

Collinson reminds us that whilst Perkins had associations with those of Presbyterian persuasion, the man himself, ‘so far as we know, played little part in the Presbyterian movement’,¹¹⁴⁷ and Breward notes that he ‘never once referred to the elders, deacons and church courts on which Cartwright, Field and Travers had set such store’, a claim with which Kendall, in a review of Perkins’s doctrine of faith, agrees. In a book which seeks to emphasize his ‘theological thrust’, Kendall sees Perkins as an advocate of ‘temporary faith’,¹¹⁴⁸ — ‘the embarrassment, if not the scandal, of English Calvinism’ — and as the ‘fountainhead of the experimental predestinarian tradition’.¹¹⁴⁹ Believing that ‘there were more fundamental issues than contentions about the details of liturgy’, Perkins’s priority was the declaration of the promises of God, his ‘treatises are essentially soteriological in nature’.¹¹⁵⁰ As for the Church as an institution, he never referred to bishops:¹¹⁵¹ the Church ‘was constituted by word and sacraments, not by a particular form of ministry’.¹¹⁵² Like Hooker, Perkins argued that ecclesiastical laws are necessary, and he upheld the right of the Church to make laws for congregational order and comeliness in the administration of Word and sacrament. This Perkins allowed, provided only that such laws were made in accordance with the ‘generall rules of Gods word’, that is, they are rules that require that all

¹¹⁴⁴ See above, pp.100 and 248

¹¹⁴⁵ Dixon, ‘Atheism’, p.799 citing William Perkins, *How to Live, and That Well*, in *The Workes of . . . William Perkins* (1608), 1:474.

¹¹⁴⁶ Dixon, ‘Atheism’, p.812

¹¹⁴⁷ Collinson, *Puritan Movement*, p.401

¹¹⁴⁸ See, Select Glossary

¹¹⁴⁹ See, Select Glossary, and Kendall, *Calvin*, p.51

¹¹⁵⁰ Kendall, *Calvin*, pp.7-9 and 52-53

¹¹⁵¹ He did refer to the bishops of the Roman Church.

¹¹⁵² Breward, ‘Introduction’, pp.11-12

should be done for edification, both seemly and in the avoidance of offence. The Word of God binds all men to them 'so farre forth as the keeping of them maintains decent order'.¹¹⁵³

Both Perkins and Andrewes maintained that they were upholding a Catholic tradition: Perkins, in *Reformed Catholike* (1598), claiming that the English Church, in its Reformed state, was restoring and safeguarding true biblical Catholicism, whilst Andrewes maintained that the Church of England was perpetuating, after the Tudor purges, all that was wholesome, those elements truly retained from ancient Catholic Christian tradition. At least, that is Andrewes's position as understood by Dorman, whose important work we need to address.

Whilst the word 'catholic' is acknowledged to mean 'universal', it remains a difficult term to define in relation to the Church, for it is a name commonly assumed by various groups to identify their own definition of the 'Universal Church'. It implies a universal, authentic, and visible Church institution, but, as Nockles argues, it 'was never satisfactorily explained'.¹¹⁵⁴ The nineteenth-century Evangelical William Goode asserted, 'what a useful weapon that word "Catholic" is! ... with three syllables it settles everything ... It is a magic word that turns everything it touches into gold'.¹¹⁵⁵ 'Catholic' is the term persistently used by Dorman to delineate the spirituality of Andrewes, whom she identifies as 'the mentor of Reformed Catholicism in the English Church', a prelate who based his theology on the teachings of the Fathers. She goes so far as to assert that it was not Hooker who first upheld 'the Catholic faith and practices within the Reformed Church. That privilege belongs to Andrewes'.¹¹⁵⁶ Whilst the Reformation is acknowledged to have been of importance to him, 'he always hankered for the best of the past, the older the better'. Dorman maintains that Andrewes expressed 'contempt' for the Genevan Church, and those Puritans who pressed for a Genevan model of Church polity, 'those who wished to impose new learning and government on Christendom after fifteen hundred years'.¹¹⁵⁷ The Puritan insistence that, on the contrary, it was they who were upholding the primitive, that is, the Apostolic Church and biblical teaching and government, is ignored by Dorman. The Puritan argument that the forms the Church of England had inherited and maintained were corrupt, ones that the primitive Church would not have recognised, is a concept that

¹¹⁵³ Perkins, *Discourse of Conscience*, pp.67-68

¹¹⁵⁴ Nockles, *Oxford Movement*, p.139

¹¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, Nockles cites William Goode, *The Case as It Is: or, a Reply to the Letter of Dr. Pusey to His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury* (London, 1842), p.59

¹¹⁵⁶ Dorman, *Lancelot Andrewes*, p.1

¹¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p.191

Dorman does not address. It was not they, the reformers, who were introducing ‘new’ ideas; the whole point of the Puritan agenda was to bring the Church back to its Apostolic — as against post Apostolic — roots, from which it had deviated.

Dorman argues that in a spirituality that was primarily sacramental, Andrewes’s devotional teaching placed

emphasis on works of mercies, the practice of auricular confession, the imitation of Christ and meditating before a crucifix. For Andrewes all these practices could never be usurped by the “new learning”.¹¹⁵⁸

She is convinced that Andrewes stood ‘in that long line of Christian tradition embedded in antiquity. ... He was truly a Catholic Christian’. She is clearly sympathetic to the assertion that Christ and ‘the Church’ speak with a single voice, and that the blessing and grace of salvation cannot be received outside the ‘Catholic’ Church. ‘Thus the Christian religion for Andrewes was essentially sacramental and ecclesial’, she argues. In a further reference to the Puritans, Dorman proceeds to assert that Andrewes ‘loathed’ those who distorted the teachings of Christ by following ‘their own spirit’ rather than the Holy Spirit. Dorman’s view of Andrewes’s abhorrence of Puritanism is endorsed by Lake, based on evidence taken from his court sermons.¹¹⁵⁹ Andrewes’s aversion to Puritanism, Lake maintains, centred on Puritan adherence to Presbyterianism, with its threat to Church order and its hierarchy and to princely power, supported by his hatred of their Nonconformity, seen as none other than a devil’s plot to undermine the Church with their trivial objections to ceremonies, a slippery slope to schism and even heresy. And that was not all, as Lake goes on to demonstrate.¹¹⁶⁰

Dorman protests that the Puritans centred their worship on the pulpit, whereas in Andrewes’s chapel ‘the altar, glittering with its candles and plate, ... was the focal point for worship’.¹¹⁶¹ The Puritan response to charges of this nature was that the centre of their worship never was the pulpit, but the Word of God. If Andrewes appealed to the Fathers, the Puritans appealed to the Scriptures; the Fathers were fallible, the Scriptures, they insisted, are not. Any doctrine, or form of worship, advocated by whatever source that was not endorsed by the Word of God was perceived by the Puritan to be erroneous, and that included glittering candles and plate on an ‘altar’; such adornments were considered alien to apostolic concepts of worship. The beauty of holiness in worship was not to be found in

¹¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p.229

¹¹⁵⁹ Lake, ‘Avant-garde Conformity’, p.115

¹¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶¹ Dorman, *Lancelot Andrewes*, p.3

beautiful ornaments, but in beautiful sanctified lives in submission to the revealed will of God.

Against that, Lake maintains, Andrewes considered that the mere act of preaching was no guarantee of godliness. In a Church obsessed with absorbing knowledge by the act of preaching, an abundance of sermons went into the ear, but nothing by way of good works came out.¹¹⁶² But, even if that questionable assertion were true, is that the fault of the sermon, or the listener? To read the evidence in the contemporary sermons themselves is to be forced to the conclusion that the demands of the godly life were clearly established, if not always accepted. Much of Lake's evidence is taken from the record of Andrewes's sermons to royalty, and any analysis of Andrewes's views is not helped by the fact that, throughout his life, he did not publish his work unless required to do so by authority, such as his sermons to royalty. These were preached for a specific elite audience, and are unlikely to present a fair example of either Andrewes's spirituality or his theological opinions in the controversial debates of the day.

It is at this point that we must make reference again to the evolution of his doctrinal stance for although, as we have seen, Dorman denies it, it is widely held that his theological perspectives did in fact evolve with the passage of time. As P.E. McCullough argues,

Andrewes' affiliations in the 1570s and 1580s are perhaps best understood as a zeal for theological study and teaching of a mainstream Elizabethan Calvinist sort (seen in his scholarship and catechizing), and a commitment to proper public observance of religious duties (seen in his sabbatarianism and concern for liturgical order).¹¹⁶³

It is, as Tyacke reminds us in an in depth analysis of the progression of Andrewes's doctrinal and liturgical positioning, 'one of the difficulties with ... Andrewes ... that neither his teaching nor his practice in fact presents a unity'.¹¹⁶⁴ Contrary to Dorman's views Tyacke maintains that far from rediscovering, in the 1590s, an 'Anglican' *via media*, — a myth in Tyacke's opinion — Andrewes was abandoning the Protestantism of the mid-sixteenth century. The myth is exposed by the very person 'traditionally regarded as its leading representative'.¹¹⁶⁵

There are additional problems, Tyacke maintains, associated with any reliance on 'Laudian' editions of his sermons and those works published in the nineteenth century by the Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology. The same argument could be levelled, of course, against any dependence on seventeenth-century editions of his early lectures, and also the

¹¹⁶² Lake, 'Avant-garde Conformity', p.116

¹¹⁶³ McCullough, 'Andrewes'

¹¹⁶⁴ Tyacke, 'Andrewes', p.7

¹¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.32-33

publications of the Parker Society.¹¹⁶⁶ *Catechistical Doctrine* — which is a record of Andrewes's Pembroke Hall lecture notes — was published anonymously in 1630, but licensed by the chaplain to Calvinist Archbishop Abbot. It appeared again in 1650 in an edited version of the 1630 edition, with a Laudian interpretative gloss, an edition in which 'there is added what ... is conceived agreeable to the declared doctrine of the Catholic Church of Christ, and of this Church in special'.¹¹⁶⁷ Yet, even in the 1650 edition, it is possible to take the view that, for Andrewes, preaching was of significant importance. There are four essentials in Christian worship: preaching, prayer, sacraments, and discipline. 'Preaching is a substantial and essential part of Gods worship. [It] is a duty of perpetual necessity under the gospel'. Nonetheless, even in his early stage, according to this edition, Andrewes is arguing that preaching,

in a strict and proper sense, ... is not part of Gods worship, as Prayer, and Praises are, for the immediate object of these is God, and their immediate end is Gods honour; but the immediate object of preaching are the men to whom we preach, and their instruction how to worship and serve God.¹¹⁶⁸

Thus Dorman is able to assert that for Andrewes the sermon must not stand alone, nor should it be central. 'Preaching the word of God could not be divorced from the Sacrament in which the Word gives himself to the faithful. ... [Andrewes] was scathing towards those preachers who monopolised worship with a sermon to the neglect of the Liturgy'. If, for Perkins and the Puritans, grace is received by apprehending the Word preached, for Andrewes, important though preaching might be, it is in the Eucharist that grace is received for in the 'Lords Supper ... our sinnes are no lesse taken away by the element of bread and wine, in the Sacrament, than [citing Isaiah 27:9] the Prophets sinne was by being touched with a Cole'.¹¹⁶⁹ Nevertheless for Andrewes preaching was held to be of vital importance. Even 'T.P.' — author of the Preface to a 1657 edition of a series of Andrewes lectures and sermons, identified by Tyacke as Thomas Pierce, 'an extreme Anti-Calvinist or Arminian',¹¹⁷⁰ — acknowledged,

as we cannot call upon him ... nor believe on him of whom we have not yet heard; so neither can wee heare without a Preacher. Upon which it followes; That because Faith commeth by Hearing, and Invocation by Faith, therefore ... Invocation is the third step; Faith the second; and lawfull Preaching the very first.¹¹⁷¹

¹¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.6-8

¹¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p.8 and Andrewes, *Catechistical Doctrine*, Preface, unpaginated

¹¹⁶⁸ Andrewes, *Catechistical Doctrine*, pp.205-206

¹¹⁶⁹ Andrewes, *Apospasmata Sacra*, p.516

¹¹⁷⁰ Tyacke, 'Andrewes', p.12

¹¹⁷¹ Andrewes, *Apospasmata Sacra*, Preface, unpaginated

What is unclear from Dorman's thesis is where she thinks Andrewes located ultimate authority: where was his rule of faith to be found? Is it in antiquity, is it in the Church, or is it in the Bible? When we turn to Andrewes's own early views, we find that in *Catechistical Doctrine* (1650) his position appears to be clear: the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament alone are true, they are God's Word, they alone are the 'rule and ground of faith'. All other books and 'oracles' of religion are 'false and erroneous'.¹¹⁷² The Roman Church holds that the interpretation of the Scriptures is given either to the Fathers, Councils, the Church, or the Pope. Andrewes asserts that the Roman view is only partly right:

We hold, that God hath given the gift of interpretation to ... such to whom God hath revealed it by his Spirit; ... it cannot be denied but that the expounding and applying thereof, is in ordinary course left by Christ to the Church, to whom he hath committed the feeding and government of his Flock, for Christ commands all to hear the Church.¹¹⁷³

But the requirement to obey the Church does not guarantee its infallibility. Nonetheless where her decrees are doubtful, 'the safest way is to submit to the judgement of the Church'. The conscience should submit to the verdicts of the 'Church', even when it appears to be in error, for the gift of interpretation is not granted to all: the 'naturall man cannot interpret them aright; nor yet the vulgar or common sort'; echoes here of Newman: the Bible and the laity are a dangerous combination. Andrewes accepted that neither the Church nor the Fathers are infallible. 'It is a vain speculation, to beleieve that the Fathers concur all in one exposition of all places of Scripture. ... if we must take them where they all agree, we shal finde many places which they do not expound alike'.¹¹⁷⁴ It is the Apostles alone that spoke by the Spirit: 'every exposition of theirs was an oracle, ... that was their peculiar priviledge, ... all others after them, are not to utter their own fancies'.¹¹⁷⁵ This was a view endorsed by Perkins; he argued that the Fathers themselves expected their own words to be closely examined and 'only to be received as they do agree with the rule of our faith and the writings of the prophets and apostles'.¹¹⁷⁶

In our interpretation of the Scriptures, Andrewes asserted that we are hindered by a twofold impediment: the first 'within us', our fallible Reason, the second, 'without us', our reliance upon inherited tradition rather than Scripture itself. 'Within us, ... is our own reason which must be rectified, else it will much hinder us'. We must avoid 'the doing of

¹¹⁷² Andrewes, *Catechistical Doctrine*, pp.34 and 42

¹¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, p.53

¹¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.42, 53, and 55-56

¹¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p.57

¹¹⁷⁶ Breward, 'Introduction', p.55, citing Perkins, *Workes*, III, p.87

every man that is right in his own eyes', or, in the words of the Apostle, 'walking in the vanity of our own mindes. ... We must cast down ... [the] high mountains of carnall and corrupt reason, and bring them into captivity and obedience'.¹¹⁷⁷ As for impediments without us, they include

taking religion from our fathers onely by tradition, by inheritance as left to us by our Elders. ... Our rule in this must be, *Scrutamini Scripturas*, search the Scriptures, and receive nothing by tradition where we finde it contrary to this rule.¹¹⁷⁸

Andrewes's reliance upon Scripture as the rule of faith appears impeccably Reformed.

On the subject of justification and his soteriology, Andrewes gives grounds for thinking that he maintained a broadly evangelical understanding. He calls upon the Apostles for support in his assertion that it was not possible to establish any law by which we might gain righteousness by the keeping of it, for the 'Scripture concluded all men under sin'. The promise of salvation is 'by faith of Jesus Christ ... given to them that believe,' although this he qualifies: 'Faith to which Justification and Salvation is ascribed in Scripture, includes obedience as to all the commandments of Christ'. Faith is 'consummated by works ... true faith ... is a practicall vertue'.¹¹⁷⁹ Thus, the ground of salvation is not founded upon our inherent righteousness, but rather, 'Christ took on him our nature, and dying for us, hath purchased the promised inheritance, to be communicated to us, by faith and new obedience or sanctification'.¹¹⁸⁰ Andrewes cites St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians in support, also Origen and Hilary, 'and divers others [who] say, "Faith only justifieth"'.¹¹⁸¹ He does not doubt the value of our inherent righteousness, but it is insufficient to justify. Our works, whilst an essential consequence of faith, are in themselves inadequate: 'it is neither our fear, nor our works, all is but God's gracious acceptance'.¹¹⁸² In Allison's summary,

Andrewes' emphasis in discussing the doctrine of justification is upon the inadequacy of inherent righteousness before God, and the consequent necessity of the imputed righteousness of Christ, especially in the context of the last judgement. He stresses the absolute nature of God's righteousness, and the gratuitous nature of grace.¹¹⁸³

As for Andrewes's views on Reformed theology,¹¹⁸⁴ Lake categorises him — in contrast to Whitgift and the leading Conformist apologists, still firm in their traditional doctrine of

¹¹⁷⁷ Andrewes, *Catechistical Doctrine*, p.108

¹¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, Preface, unpaginated

¹¹⁸⁰ Andrewes, *Catechistical Doctrine*, p.73

¹¹⁸¹ Andrewes, *Works*, V, p.166. Ephesians: 2. 8

¹¹⁸² Andrewes, *Sermon*, p.340, cited by Allison, *Moralism*, pp.28-29

¹¹⁸³ Allison, *Moralism*, p.29

¹¹⁸⁴ See, Select Glossary

double predestination — with the Arminians, or ‘proto-Arminians’.¹¹⁸⁵ Paul A. Welsby considers him, at the time of the Synod of Dort (1618/1619), to have been theologically ‘far more akin to ... the Arminians than to ... the Calvinists’.¹¹⁸⁶ Tyacke maintains that the catechistical lectures, even in their 1650 form, demonstrate a man upholding a ‘mild’ form of Calvinism, particularly in his support for the doctrine of final perseverance.¹¹⁸⁷ Dorman avers that ‘Andrewes acknowledged that there are the “elect” and “reprobate” in life, but not from God’s pleasure, but through the sins of man’.¹¹⁸⁸ Andrewes accepted that God knew the number of the elect from all eternity, ‘but this was by his eternal knowledge, and not by his foreordaining’.¹¹⁸⁹ If Dorman’s interpretation is right, then in this regard he was in direct opposition to Perkins, who followed the Bezan insistence on double predestination:

Predestination hath two parts, the decree of election, and the decree of reprobation. ... As Angelome saith: Christ by his secret dispensation hath out of an unfaithfull people predestinated some to everlasting liberty, quickning them of his free mercie: and damned others in everlasting death, in leaving them by his hidden Judgement in their wickednes.¹¹⁹⁰

Andrewes was not ready to commit himself on the subject, indeed he deliberately avoided it, for he considered it to be a mystery not suited to open debate. In his response to the 1595 Lambeth Articles, a reaction which Welsby — questionably — considers to be a vigorous objection,¹¹⁹¹ Andrewes declared that

I in truth ingenuously confess, that I have followed St. *Austin's* Advice, Such Mysteries as I cannot unfold to admire them as they are concealed: And therefore for these Sixteen Years, ever since I was made Priest, I have neither publicly nor privately disputed about them, or medled with them in my Sermons: And even now I had much rather hear than speak of them myself.¹¹⁹²

Required to declare himself, Andrewes did accept that the Scriptures teach that God in his eternal knowledge has, from all eternity, predestined some to life and rejected, or reprobated, others ‘for their sins’. He cites the Fathers who, he argues, ‘almost all do assert, that we are both elected and predestinated according to a Faith foreseen’. Andrewes accepted the teaching of Augustine, endorsed by Ambrose, that ‘the Number of those who are predestinated, is so certain, that none can be added to, or taken away from them’. On the doctrine of final perseverance Andrewes asserted that ‘I suppose nobody ever said, that

¹¹⁸⁵ Lake, *Anglicans and Puritans?*, p.176, and Lake, ‘Avant-garde Conformity’, p.113

¹¹⁸⁶ Welsby, *Andrewes*, p.172

¹¹⁸⁷ Tyacke, ‘Andrewes’, p.9

¹¹⁸⁸ Dorman, *Lancelot Andrewes*, p.145

¹¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p.146

¹¹⁹⁰ Perkins, *Predestination*, p.6

¹¹⁹¹ Welsby, *Andrewes*, p.43

¹¹⁹² Andrewes, ‘Judgement’, p.111

Faith may finally fail in those that are elected; for that to be sure it does not'. Nevertheless, citing various biblical texts, he asks 'would not all these be Ironical Precepts and Speeches, if we could in no sort fall off from the stedfastness of Faith, or from Grace, if the Holy Spirit could no way be quenched or taken from us?'¹¹⁹³ As for 'free-will', set against irresistible grace, he acknowledges that 'it is not placed either in the Free-Will of any One, unless redeemed by the Son; nor is it in the Power of any one, unless it be given him from above, to be saved'. From these assertions it is difficult to argue that Andrewes was either a committed Arminian or that he wholeheartedly denied Calvinist dogma. 'As I have all along said, so even now would advise, that a faithful Silence might be enjoyn'd on both sides'.¹¹⁹⁴ In a sermon on the Lord's Prayer he argued that 'we are not curiously to enquire and search out of Gods secret touching Reprobation or Election, but to adore it'.¹¹⁹⁵ From which we might conclude that he was not denying it.

Whilst Andrewes's mild Calvinism could be said to have evolved towards anti-Calvinism with the passage of time, in other respects he maintained a strong 'Puritan' emphasis. The use of images and pictures in worship Andrewes repudiates, citing considerable evidence from the Fathers. The early Church met in temples which were 'bare, without ornaments', and 'Ireneus doth utterly disallow the images of Christ and the Apostles' and, as Tertullian taught, 'we adore with our eyes fixt on heaven, not bent upon images and pictures'.¹¹⁹⁶ Throughout life, Andrewes was as insistent as the Puritans on a strict adherence to the fourth commandment, the sanctified Sabbath, now to be called the Lord's day, a view which he expounds at great length in *Catechistical Doctrine* (1650):

The chief end of this day, is, that God may be sanctified, that is, magnified so the subordinate end is, that we may be sanctified, by the duties which we must then performe. The sabbath was a signe between God and his people, that they might know that it was he that sanctified them.¹¹⁹⁷

From these observations it has to be concluded that Andrewes cannot be categorised with ease. In many respects he is at variance at a deep level with Perkins and the Puritan stance, yet not wholly so: some of his early convictions he retained with considerable persuasion.

To return to Perkins, to read his work is to become aware that his approach is pastoral rather than controversial. *Reformed Catholike* (1598) was certainly a work concerned with religious divisions, in particular that between the Reformed and the Roman Catholic

¹¹⁹³ 2 Peter: 3: 17, Galatians 5: 4 and Psalm 1: 13, Andrewes, 'Judgement', p.118

¹¹⁹⁴ Andrewes, 'Judgement', pp.111-121

¹¹⁹⁵ Andrewes, *Concerning Prayer*, p.138

¹¹⁹⁶ Andrewes, *Catechistical Doctrine*, p.203

¹¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.286

(Papist) persuasions. Yet even there, whilst he insisted that there are fundamental grounds for separation that cannot be avoided, he acknowledged, ‘touching the point of supremacie Ecclesiasticall, I will set downe how neare we may come to the Romane Church’.¹¹⁹⁸ Among the similarities and differences he addresses he accepts that honour is due to the Saints, though not servitude, and of the Virgin he acknowledges that ‘Marie is beautifull and holy and honoured, yet not to adoration’.¹¹⁹⁹ Of the saints departed, ‘they are to be honoured by an imitation of their faith, humilitie, meekenesse, repentance, the feare of God, & all good vertues wherin they excelled’.¹²⁰⁰ He even goes so far as to accept the value of relics. ‘If any man can shewe us the bodily relique of any true Saint: and proove it so to be though we will not worship it, yet will we not despise it but keepe it as a monument’.¹²⁰¹

Perkins admits that ‘both Papists and Protestants agree, that a sinner is justified by faith, [but] this agreement is onely in word, and the difference betweene us is great indeede’.¹²⁰² An important difference for Perkins is the approach of the Churches in their pastoral concern over the issue of the individual’s assurance of salvation, which is ever a problem for the Calvinist: “how can I be certain that I am one of the elect?” Perkins maintained that ‘we holde ... that a man in this life, may be certen of salvation: and the same thing doth the Church of Rome teach and hold’.¹²⁰³ But there is an essential difference. ‘Both of us hold a certentie, we by faith, they by hope. ... we hold ... that our certentie by true faith is unfallible: they say, their certentie is onely probable’.¹²⁰⁴ The general promise is clear, Perkins argues: whoever shall believe shall be saved. The promise becomes particular to the individual when the minister of the gospel, standing in the stead of Christ, announces to that individual that, if they will repent and believe, then he/she will be saved: ‘that is as much as if the Lord himselfe should speake to men particularly’. On fulfilment of those conditions, salvation is certain.¹²⁰⁵ Grace is received through the preaching of the Word.

Dorman makes a direct comparison between Andrewes and Perkins and their approaches to assurance. As opposed to Perkins’s teaching that the elect cannot finally fall from Christ, Andrewes taught, she maintains, ‘that salvation can never be taken as a *fait accompli*, but is a process which involves effort and faithfulness’.¹²⁰⁶ As such, he aligned with Perkins’s critique of the Roman position: Andrewes, with them, placed reliance on the

¹¹⁹⁸ Perkins, *Reformed Catholike*, p.283

¹¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.255

¹²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p.246

¹²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, pp.246-247

¹²⁰² *Ibid.*, p.78

¹²⁰³ *Ibid.*, p.37

¹²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p.39

¹²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.40-41

¹²⁰⁶ Dorman, *Lancelot Andrewes*, p.117

assurance of hope rather than on an assurance of faith. In that belief, all we can hope for is that we continue to the end.

Dorman is at pains to emphasize Andrewes's alleged opposition to Reformed theology and Puritan ideology, but to read his work is to sense that his concern was for the maintenance of a positive approach to matters of faith and practice, rather than being deliberately confrontational. In *Catechistical Doctrine* (1650) there is no reference to Puritans. The Reformed Churches are mentioned positively, just twice, and even the single reference to 'reformed sectaries' was in a positive vein. He mentioned Calvin twice, again with approval on both occasions, and whilst not always agreeing with Luther, in six references to his teaching Andrewes treated him with respect. With Perkins also, it is difficult to locate a directly confrontational polemic. 'His most valuable characteristic ... was his practical common sense', by which he was able to 'reduce the complexities of abstruse theological doctrine to simple counsel and simple language'.¹²⁰⁷ As a result he gained a reputation as a popular advocate of practical divinity, the first promoter of a sorely needed Reformed casuistry in the Church of England.¹²⁰⁸ What incentive, ran the Catholic argument, can there be for any ethical behaviour given the Protestant insistence on *sola fide*, and Reformed doctrines of election? Perkins's *Discourse of Conscience* (1596) and *Cases of Conscience* (1604) were typical of the Puritan response. His teachings on the Eucharist were similarly far from provocative: 'we holde and beleeeve a presence of Christs bodie and bloode in the Sacrament of the Lords supper: ... a true and reall presence'. The bread and wine were seen as 'signes of Christs body and blood, not for ever but for the time of administration: for afterward they become againe, as common bread and wine'.¹²⁰⁹ Whilst denying the Roman doctrine of transubstantiation, for the Sacrament is spiritual and mystical, yet there is a 'reall union, and consequently a reall communion betweene us and Christ, ... Christ is truly and really present to the heart of him that receives the sacrament in faith. ... thus farre doe we consent with the Romish Church touching reall presence'.¹²¹⁰

It is not difficult to locate, I suggest, in the works of both Andrewes and Perkins openness to alternative traditions, a reluctance to engage in divisive debate that has little regard for divergent arguments, separation for them both was not an option. Not everyone was to follow their example. Both were exposed, as were their fellow Conformists and Nonconformists in both periods, to the influence not only of personal convictions and the

¹²⁰⁷ Merrill, *Perkins*, p.ix

¹²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p.xi

¹²⁰⁹ Perkins, *Reformed Catholike*, pp.179 and 189

¹²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.189

strength of peer pressure, but also to the power of establishment authority vested in the Church's ecclesia, the Crown, the government and Parliament. Some separated whilst others remained loyal in the face of such powers. Therefore, before drawing together my final conclusions, we will examine the nature and effects of institutional involvement which will lead us to an examination the reasons for the divergence in the Nonconformist response to authority's demands.

Chapter 8

Conscience and the power of institutional authority

It is the general consent of all sound protestant writers, that neither traditions, councils, nor canons of any visible church, much less edicts of any magistrate or civil session, but scripture only, can be the final judge or rule in matters of religion, and that only in the conscience of every Christian to himself.

John Milton, *Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes* (1659)¹²¹¹

In the course of this research into religious dissention within early modern English Christendom, it has been apparent that the freedom of individual men and women to believe and act as they wished in the pursuit of their Christian discipleship was severely restricted. Privately, conscience was held by many to be inviolate and, in the immediate aftermath of the enactments of the early 1660s, Sir Charles Wolseley (1630?-1714) endorsed that view: ‘Amongst all the endowments bestowed upon the sons of men, nothing is to have higher price and value put upon it, than that we call Conscience.’ After all, he argued, ‘for this we have plain Scripture. Every man shall give an account of himself to God ... To say a man is not to judge for himself is to ... change him from a rational Creature to a Bruit’.¹²¹²

But the prevailing culture denied him the exercise of that freedom. In religion, submission had to be conceded to those holding power, first in the Church, the body considered to hold a divine right to rule the hearts and lives of men and women in the expression of their religion, a responsibility which it was only too ready to exercise. But neither was the Church free to act without constraint, for what was to be practised, and even what was to be believed, were subject in varying degrees to the resolutions of those who held the reins in the nation’s governing institutions. The king was not ‘Supreme Govenor’ in name only: involvement in religious affairs was taken seriously by the Crown, by predominantly lay constitutional councils, and by lay synods sitting in Parliament whose membership held to a variety of religious priorities not necessarily sympathetic to the ideals of the Church, its hierarchy or its adherents. This was a state of affairs in direct opposition to Wolseley’s contention that ‘no Prince, nor State, ought by force to compel Men to any part of the Doctrine, Worship, or Discipline of the Gospel’.¹²¹³

¹²¹¹ Milton, *Civil Power*, p.7

¹²¹² Wolseley, *Liberty of Conscience*, pp.5 and 44

¹²¹³ *Ibid.*, Title

Given the undoubted effect that Establishment demands had upon the religious life of the nation, upon the Church, and upon the individual Christian believer, what were the ideological incentives which motivated those institutions? What were the standards upon which their decisions were based, the status of the empowering documentation, and what was the mechanism by which institutions sought to enforce their decisions, for the conscience of the individual, whose ideas and actions we are exploring, was not exempt from such influences? The consequences reached ground level and personal decisions were being made which were provoked by demands made upon the conscience by established order, civil as well as ecclesiastical.

This chapter will focus on the power of established institutional authorities in the imposition of decisive tests of belief and practice upon the consciences of servants of the Church in both centuries. Those standards — intended to bring radical agitation into line — and the responses of those involved, were multifaceted; they were not identical in all situations. My contention is that the implementation of coercive legislation and the conscientious reaction of those implicated did not result in division in the Elizabethan Church: separation was largely avoided because doctrine was not allowed to overrule other essential demands involving the interests of the nation, the Church, and its members. In the next century the result was different: imposed standards which directly challenged the foundational ideologies that were the driving force for religious commitment were permitted, by both sides, to cause division between Christian believers. In support of my claims it is the intention of this chapter to explore the motivations that drove the actions of legislators and the responses of participants in the debates.

Institutional engagement in the evolving religious events during our periods could well constitute a study in itself, not least because it was often disorderly and divided. But in the context of my arguments a number of questions arise. These relate to the empowering Establishment itself: who instigated the requirements? Was regulation enforced by Act of Parliament, by royal proclamation, by an Ecclesiastical Commission, the Canons of the Church perhaps, by Convocation, or even by the Archbishops under their metropolitan authority? What were the objectives behind the implementation of directives? Have we in the 1660s, a desire to return to the old ways, described by Paul Seaward as a ‘reconstruction of the old regime’? Was the sought-after settlement a reaction to the last twenty years, indicative of a fear of past instability and of renewed insurrection, or was it even retaliation for past injustices? The obsessive and often counter-productive administrative preoccupation in the 1660s with these problems, both secular and religious, must have had

some definite objectives. The ‘difficulty lies’, as Seaward observes, ‘in deciding what they were, and who had them’,¹²¹⁴ and, for our purposes, were they matched in the previous century? Finally there is the question of enforcement: how positively and in what manner were the regulations executed and what were the consequences of disobedience? In short, and of primary significance for this thesis, in what ways did the implementation of regulation affect the response of the individual Christian?

A parallel and interesting — though not identical — study into the force of institutional involvement in England’s religious life is provided by Questier in a chapter in which he also considers the enforcement of religious conformity by Tudor and Stuart legislators, its nature and consequences.¹²¹⁵ Questier’s interest lies in the strength of institutional inducements made to force people to alter their religious views and commitment, in particular to induce ‘recusant Catholics to abandon ... their loyalty to the Roman Church.’¹²¹⁶ A decision whether to convert, to become either a Protestant or a Catholic, was not a matter solely of personal conviction arrived at on ideological grounds.¹²¹⁷ ‘Statute-conformity was both religious and political.’¹²¹⁸ Questions are raised by Questier, such as ‘how far [did] the State’s political agenda dictate the opinions of individuals about the Church?’, and ‘did the State require people to become Protestants or merely to conform to the letter of the law ... a minimum standard?’, and did a forced conversion of the recalcitrant achieve anything at all: was it not rather a facade?¹²¹⁹ Constraints of space have necessitated the need to concentrate our study on religious diversity among English Protestants, but these considerations, relative to Catholic recusancy, do raise similar issues for us applicable to ‘godly’ nonconformity and separation.

There is one element which manifests itself as a legislative characteristic in both periods: policymakers were reacting to traumatic events. In the seventeenth century in the political, social, and religious arena, ‘politicians – ministers, officials, Churchmen, parliamentarians – sought to rebuild the world that had been smashed in the events of the 1640s’.¹²²⁰ In the Church in England in the previous century the response was to the Reformation, or rather to contested ideas about the Reformation. In a country gripped by fears of schism and a return to papacy, religious and national unity was considered to be under threat. Bancroft,

¹²¹⁴ Seaward, *Cavalier Parliament*, p.4

¹²¹⁵ ‘The Church under the law: the regime and the enforcement of conformity’, in Questier, *Conversion*, pp.98-125

¹²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.98

¹²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.2

¹²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.98 and 158

¹²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.98-100

¹²²⁰ Seaward, *Cavalier Parliament*, p.6

in his February 1588/9 Paul's Cross sermon, fulminated against 'Schismatikes [who] separate themselves from us ... [and who] for the most part do proove heretikes', and also the 'false prophets which are in the church ... [who] sow in everie place their cursed and slanderous speeches',¹²²¹ sentiments which were to be matched by Sheldon in the 1660s. Of the previous twenty years, he argued, 'our Church ... was broken almost to pieces with Schismes, Factions and Heresies, our profession scandalized, with damnable Errors and Blasphemies, so that we had scarce the face of a true Church left among us'.¹²²² In both periods it might prove costly, but it was the conviction of many in power that disarray needed to be legislated out of existence for the sake of the nation as well as that of the Church. In her examination of the juxtaposition between toleration and the enforcement of religious orthodoxy in early modern England, Alexandra Walsham notes that in a society 'in which truth was held to be single and indivisible, the persecution of dissident minorities was [considered] logical, rational and legitimate.' Both Tudor and Stuart ecclesiastical and secular authorities concluded that they had a responsibility to punish and, by any means, to uphold true religion and reclaim the wayward. Correction 'was a moral duty and an ordained obligation'.¹²²³

So we find that in the Elizabethan Church unity was to be achieved through uniformity, and prescriptive obligations to conform became major issues for both zealous and moderate Puritans. Yet although coercive measures were introduced to bring Nonconformity into line, summarised by Lake as 'Whitgift's move in 1583-4 to impose a ... draconian version of subscription which included approbation of the Prayer Book', widespread deprivations were then averted.¹²²⁴ Accounts of this Whitgiftian drive for stricter conformity have been amply provided by both Collinson and Fincham, and their analyses we shall be highlighting.¹²²⁵ It was an initiative supported by requirements in the 1559 Act of Uniformity and the Subscription (Thirty-Nine Articles) Act (1571) which were not dissimilar to those imposed by the 1662 Act including, in 1559, an obligation to use the official prayer book at 'Matins, Evensong, celebration of the Lord's Supper and administration of each of the sacraments, and all their common and open prayer, in such order and form as is mentioned in the said book'.¹²²⁶ The 1571 Act did require a declaration of assent before a bishop or a 'guardian of spiritualities' by Christmas of that year on pain

¹²²¹ Bancroft, *Sermon*, Preamble

¹²²² [Sheldon], *Peroration*, pp.180-181

¹²²³ Walsham, *Charitable Hatred*, pp.1-2

¹²²⁴ Lake, 'Modified Subscription', pp.180-181.

¹²²⁵ Collinson, *Puritan Movement*, pp.243-272 and Fincham, 'Clerical Conformity', pp.130-132

¹²²⁶ Appendix I (a), 'Act of Uniformity, 1559', p.309

of deprivation, but this Act was directed more specifically against those who had received ‘any other form of institution, consecration, or ordering, than the form set forth by Parliament in the time of ... King Edward VI’; in other words, ‘all clergy who had been ordained in the reign of Queen Mary’.¹²²⁷ There were some differences between the earlier and later Acts but, more significantly, there was variation in their enforcement.

Whitgift — whose intolerance of Presbyterian nonconformity we have explored in some detail¹²²⁸ — was elected Archbishop of Canterbury on August 24, 1583 and confirmed a month later. He soon made his intentions public in a sermon at Paul’s Cross on November 19. Scripture teaches us, he proclaimed, ‘that obedience is necessarie, and required of all Christians.’ He denounced the ‘troublesome persons’, those that are ‘conceited, and wayward, who onely obey when they list, wherein they list, and so long as they list: men delighted with singularitie, whome nothing can please, but that which themselves doe invent’. Quoting Ireneus, he accused them of being those who ‘for every small cause ... devide & cut in sunder the glorious bodie of Christ, [and] as much as in them lieth ... they straine at a gnat, and swallow up a Cammell’.¹²²⁹ Whitgift insisted: obedience to Prince, magistrate and bishop is obligatory, and a month prior to this oration one of his first actions as Archbishop had been to issue, on October 19, having consulted several bishops in his province, his ‘Articles Touching Preachers and Other Orders for the Church’. These articles had within them three specific sub-sections which demanded consent and subscription by priests and deacons, this to be declared before the Ordinary of the diocese in which they ministered.¹²³⁰ They required a mandatory acknowledgement of the Sovereign’s rule over the Church, the acceptance of the Book of Common Prayer as in accord with the Word of God, and recognition of the ‘Articles of religion, agreed upon by the archbishops and bishops of both provinces, and the whole clergy in the Convocation holden at London in ... 1562’,¹²³¹ ‘and set forth by her majesty’s authority ... [as] agreeable to the Word of God’.¹²³² Only those who subscribed might preach, read, catechize, or administer the sacraments.

Whilst they may have had support, these articles did not enjoy formal royal or civil legitimacy: they were tendered to the Queen but received from her no official endorsement, nor yet from Parliament or the Ecclesiastical Commission. They were issued and circulated

¹²²⁷ ‘Subscription Act, 1571’, p.478 and Torrance Kirby, ‘Articles’, p.371

¹²²⁸ Above, Chapter 7

¹²²⁹ Whitgift, *Sermon*, unpaginated

¹²³⁰ See Appendix I (b), Whitgift, *Articles*, p.314

¹²³¹ Thirty-eight articles in 1562/1563; the Thirty-Nine Articles as ratified by Parliament and the Queen in 1571

¹²³² Appendix I (b), Whitgift, *Articles*, p.314

to the dioceses on Whitgift's authority and that of his supporting bishops.¹²³³ Nonetheless their objective was evidently to bring dissidents back into line with the 1559 and 1571 parliamentary legislation. By comparison, in 1662, it was Parliament itself which was requiring subscription, directly empowered by an Act which was some 7500 words long — almost three times that of the 1559 Act¹²³⁴ — with a specific date given for the obligatory subscription, backed with a warning, failing acceptance, of immediate deprivation. Ministers were required to sign a 'Form of Assent' declaring their 'unfaigned assent and consent to all and every thing contained and prescribed in and by the Booke intituled The Booke of Co[m]mon Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments ...'. They were thereby faced with a question of conscience: apart from perceived errors in the Prayer Book, should they agree to confine their ministry to the inconvenience of a strict liturgical form which appeared to give scant regard for the sermon? Should they give assent to all the Thirty-Nine Articles which include (for them) undesirable articles covering the consecration of bishops and ministers, and an article limiting the sufficiency of Scripture only to matters of salvation? In them the prerogative of the established Church over the conscience in matters of faith and practice was settled, for as Article XX declares, it is 'the Church [that] hath power to decree Rites or Ceremonies, and authority in Controversies of Faith', the only requirement being that it does not 'ordain any thing that is contrary to God's Word written'. The Act's demands were absolute: on failure to subscribe and declare his subscription before his congregation, a minister 'shall (ipso facto) be deprived of all his Spirituall Promotions'. There was no such threat in the 1559 Act, although there was in 1571.

The earlier Act of Uniformity (1559), which together with the Act of Supremacy of the same year is styled by Collinson as 'the bare bones of [a] religious settlement ... a piece of Erastianism never authorised by the clergy in Convocation',¹²³⁵ demanded conformity in common prayer and the administration of the sacraments without a formal act of submission, rather obedience in practice. In the event of a conviction for failure to conform fines and imprisonment were threatened, even, in extreme cases, confinement for life. The 1583 articles did require formal subscription, as did the 1571 Subscription Act, and those refusing were denied the right to ministry. Whitgift sought to impose his articles throughout his province and some ministers were suspended. Collinson estimates that

¹²³³ Bishops of London, Salisbury, Rochester, Lincoln, Peterborough, and Gloucester: Collinson; *Puritan Movement*, p.244

¹²³⁴ For the wording of the Acts, see Appendix I (a) and (c), pp.309-313, and 315-325

¹²³⁵ Collinson, 'Anti-Papist', p.146

between three and four hundred refused subscription, the bulk in East Anglia, the East Midlands, London, and the South East, but the implementation of consequences were diverse. Appeals and petitions to the archbishop and the Privy Council abounded and bitter recriminations resulted which had the effect of undermining the archbishop's policies.¹²³⁶ By comparison the penalties of the 1662 Act were unavoidable, immediately enforced without mitigation. In both Uniformity Acts adherence to the current prayer book was required but, as David Thompson has observed, unlike its predecessors the revised 1662 *Book of Common Prayer* was directed against the radical reformists rather than against Rome.¹²³⁷ Then again the 1662 Act insisted on episcopal ordination (or reordination) which was not a requirement raised by the Elizabethan Act, although Travers was seriously limited in his ministry because of his refusal to undergo episcopal reordination. The controversial dean of Durham, William Whittingham (*d.* 1579), was in 1578 brought to task over his Genevan ordination, but there the concern was whether or not he had been properly ordained according to the Genevan rite: this appears to have been the main issue at stake.¹²³⁸ By the 1660's, it could be argued, the requirements had become more rigorous than under Elizabeth's jurisdiction, and the severity of the 1662 Act of Uniformity exceeded that of 1559. Perhaps most seriously its implementation was intended to be instant and permanent.

In the later decades of the Elizabethan period, Puritan concerns raised by the primate's 1583 requirements were not limited to an isolated few. As Collinson has observed,

those ministers in the Church of England who would be troubled by Whitgift's demand for a total endorsement of the Prayer Book were relatively numerous ... puritans in the broadest sense of the term; of this generation of clergy, few with minds of their own would subscribe to the Whitgiftian formula without a qualm.¹²³⁹

Even so, among the nonconforming, whilst a number were suspended and others were made to subscribe, the majority were not pressed into conformity.¹²⁴⁰ A number of explanations are possible for this, not least that Whitgift came under influential pressure from privy councillors, laymen, and scholars. Such a voice was that of the Oxfordshire MP and privy councillor, Sir Francis Knollys (1511/12-1596) who was appalled that those responsible for popish treason were neglected whilst zealous preachers, who posed no threat to the Queen, were being persecuted. This, and like-minded arguments from

¹²³⁶ Collinson, *Puritan Movement*, pp.252-258

¹²³⁷ Thompson, 'Great Ejection', August 29, 2012

¹²³⁸ Marcombe, 'Whittingham'

¹²³⁹ Collinson, *Puritan Movement*, p.245

¹²⁴⁰ Fincham, 'Clerical Conformity', p.131

prominent men and women in society, had the effect of easing the requirement for strict adherence.¹²⁴¹ The policy had the added consequence of strengthening the nonconformist arguments and broadening their appeal amongst moderate puritans. Whitgift was seeking to impose ‘an unattainable degree of uniformity’, but in the long term his policy, ‘continued ... [later] by Bancroft and the Laudians, was as much responsible as any puritan excess for destroying the comprehensiveness of the Church of England’.¹²⁴² Cross maintains that ‘he [Whitgift] found himself powerless to impose a rigid Protestant uniformity across the country ... to halt the lay advance which had forged ahead under his predecessors Parker and Grindal’.¹²⁴³ Also it should be recalled that not until Bancroft’s Paul’s Cross sermon of 1588/9 was it claimed by Elizabethan bishops that their office held authority by divine right. Whilst to resist the bishop was to deny the authority of a legal appointment in the Church, it remained a matter of debate whether to resist the bishop was a rebellion against God’s empowered executor: that was to follow in the next century.¹²⁴⁴ Fincham has also shown that the exercise of authority from royalty downwards was diverse, devolved and decentralised. Whilst ‘broad national trends can be detected in the construction and drive for clerical conformity,’ there remained ‘significant differences in its implementation’. ‘The structure of diocesan authority’, he argues, ‘had a profound influence on the character of episcopal government. A bishop’s control over ecclesiastical administration [for example] was much weaker in sizeable dioceses’ where administration was devolved. So it proved that in the last years of Elizabeth’s reign Presbyterians and moderate Nonconformists, although their aspirations for a fully reformed Church were denied, were able, for the most part, to remain in the established Church on acceptable terms. In the Jacobean Church their loyalty was even enhanced by James’s dedication to ‘unity among obedient protestants’, a move in which the king saw ‘political advantage in patronising rival groups ... James demanded minimal conformity from puritans’.¹²⁴⁵

These examples of laxity in administration were to change in the 1630s with the ‘introduction, by the Laudians, of “new” conformist ideals and practices’.¹²⁴⁶ A generation later, the pressures brought to bear on the scruples of those in ministry were, by the 1660s, severe, but historians are not always agreed as to their origin. Robert Bosher and I.M. Green have proposed contrasting interpretations of the breakdown in the Restoration

¹²⁴¹ Collinson, *Puritan Movement*, p.247, and pp.256-258

¹²⁴² *Ibid.*, pp.246-247

¹²⁴³ Cross, *Church and People*, p.135

¹²⁴⁴ See above, p.116

¹²⁴⁵ Fincham, ‘Introduction’, p.12 and Fincham, *Prelate*, p.152

¹²⁴⁶ Fincham, ‘Clerical Conformity’, pp.126 and 130

settlement process. Bosher, writing in 1951, places accountability upon a traditional group within the Church hierarchy once more holding the power to reinstate their ideas for a pure Church institution. He argues that attempts at conciliation following the Restoration failed because of the activities of the 'Laudian party' — the 'High-Church' group — during the years 1645-62. Their position had been firmly laid during the Interregnum, for Cromwell's leniency from 1649 enabled them to claim to be the rightful spokesmen of the 'Anglican' tradition after suffering under the stringent measures of the Puritan Parliaments. In a society in which 'Anglicanism' was forced to review its relationship with a State Church that had abolished episcopacy, this Laudian party, intensely Royalist and maintaining an 'essentially Catholic interpretation of the Anglican settlement', alone refused to be assimilated. Their aim remained consistent and aggressive and it was they who became identified with 'Anglican' resistance, 'they alone could claim full loyalty to the Church of England as it had formerly existed', and in the post-Restoration negotiations, their devotion to the Church gained political strength for their 'High Church' principles.¹²⁴⁷ The once exiled divines, such as Cosin of Durham, Morley of Winchester and John Bramhall (1594-1663) of Armagh, had taken advantage of their opportunity to influence the exiled royal court to such effect that, at the end of the Interregnum, Royalist policy was in the hands of those who supported their Church interests. Despite Charles's undertaking, in the Declaration of Breda (April 4, 1660), to grant 'liberty to tender consciences', any accommodation with Presbyterians was bitterly resisted. Lord Chancellor Edward Hyde (1609-1674), Earl of Clarendon, gave support, with some reluctance, to the introduction of a series of measures that came to be known as the 'Clarendon Code'.¹²⁴⁸ Bosher maintains that divisions in the Presbyterian ranks between moderates and their stricter brethren were fostered to such an extent that eventually the Cavalier Parliament rejected all attempts to negotiate even with moderates, requiring the full restoration of the Church by law established. The Laudian triumph resulted in the establishment of an *Ecclesia Anglicana* that was of quite another spirit than Geneva.¹²⁴⁹

Green has a different view of events. He considers that Bosher's use of the term 'Laudian', after the Restoration, is anachronistic in that Laud's policies were unworkable in 1660. Bosher's identification of 'Laudian' clergy is questioned since it includes men of known moderate opinion, men who had fallen into disfavour under Laud. Green includes Morley, Gauden and even Cosin in this category. The king was not submissive to 'Laudian'

¹²⁴⁷ Bosher, *Restoration Settlement*, p.278

¹²⁴⁸ See below, p.272

¹²⁴⁹ Bosher, *Restoration Settlement*, p.282

advice, nor was he committed to its strategy.¹²⁵⁰ It was his declared policy to effect a compromise settlement based on a limited episcopacy, but his intentions were frustrated by force of circumstances and the strength of deliberate lay obstruction. The forces of reaction took two forms. The county gentry gave clear indication of their desire for a Church on 'traditional' lines, coupled with the strength of lay intervention in Parliament. There, compromise proposals were rejected and a series of intolerant measures were forced upon the king, the 1662 Act of Uniformity being the result.¹²⁵¹

These analyses are not mutually exclusive: there is strength in both interpretations, but the question remains; why were these stringent obstacles to genuine unity and mutual understanding imposed? What was the thinking behind the decisions of the Cavalier Parliament in 1662? Despite what J.R. Jones saw — in an analysis conceived in 1979 when a court versus country historiography was fashionable — as the reappearance of the old divisions between 'Court and Country', with his perception of the resultant opposition within Parliament to ministerial proposals, he does make the valid point that 'there were always sufficient Anglican zealots to swamp those who wanted a broader church settlement'. Sufficient indeed was the opposition that attempts by the sovereign to ameliorate the severity of the legislation in his December 1662 Declaration of Indulgence aroused amongst rigid Anglicans 'suspicions that were never entirely to subside during the rest of [his] reign'.¹²⁵² Doubts, such as 'fears of royal absolutism and Catholicism', fostered the 'coercive legislation' which was to follow,¹²⁵³ enacted by a Parliament, Jones concludes, divided between those who mistrusted the King and his ministers and those who were suspicious of the opposition's sincerity, alarmed at 'the apparent danger of renewed civil conflicts'.¹²⁵⁴ It was confusion 'over ecclesiastical policy', Seaward argues, that gave Anglican enthusiasts their opportunity. Division was itself 'the principal cause of the uncompromising legislation that was ultimately enacted'.¹²⁵⁵

Whilst allowing for these conclusions, historians have also emphasized deeper reactions to past events, not the least of which is seen as a conservative reaction by middle orders to lost power both locally and nationally. R.A. Beddard argues that the nobility and gentry, having been excluded from power in Cromwellian politics, reacted to such effect that, in a change of heart, Parliament rejected the possibility of a negotiated settlement with the

¹²⁵⁰ Green, *Re-establishment*, pp.22-24

¹²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p.2

¹²⁵² Jones, 'Parties', p.50

¹²⁵³ The 'Clarendon Code', detailed below, p.272

¹²⁵⁴ Jones, 'Parties', pp.9 and 28

¹²⁵⁵ Seaward, *Cavalier Parliament*, pp.162-163

Presbyterians.¹²⁵⁶ Twenty years previously the House of Commons had shown little sympathy with the interests of the episcopal Church of England, but experience had demonstrated that the breakdown of past order and the granting of religious liberty brought with it political instability, resistance — sometimes violent — to established governance, and an erosion of their own powers. ‘Far from affording the nobility and gentry greater recognition, the Puritan Revolution had ... deprived them of their hereditary influence in the counsels of the nation’.¹²⁵⁷ Few of them had ever contemplated actually leaving the Church of their upbringing. Now its role in reaffirming an established stable order was seen to be effective in reconstructing their own position. As such, Seaward maintains, ‘the triumph of anglicanism [was seen by some as] little more than the spiritual equivalent of the triumph of the gentry’. Gentry support for the monarchy and the legislation enacted in the 1660s are seen as a consolidation of their own interests, an extension of their own influence.¹²⁵⁸

Unease amounting to revulsion at the religious turmoil of the past twenty years was undoubtedly a factor motivating legislators. The 1662 Act of Uniformity was enacted by a Parliament which lasted from 8 May 1661 until 24 January 1679 — the longest English Parliament, enduring for nearly 18 years. The Act was part of the ‘Clarendon Code’ — a series of discriminatory statutes aimed at reinstating the supremacy of the established Church — measures which, Spurr argues, were driven by a ‘complex interaction of genuine fears, political calculations and mismanagement ... which were designed to root out all Protestants save the Anglicans’.¹²⁵⁹ The ‘Code’, in addition to the 1662 Uniformity Act, included the Corporation Act (1661), which required public officials to reject the Solemn League and Covenant, the Conventicle Act (1664), which forbade all unauthorised meetings for worship in excess of five persons, and the Five-Mile Act (1665), which prevented dissenting ministers from coming within five miles of their former livings and from teaching in schools. Spurr sees the Act of Uniformity itself as an attempt to ‘re-impose religious uniformity in a country which had experienced twenty years of religious freedom and experimentation’.¹²⁶⁰ Certainly no concessions were being granted to dissent. Toleration was perceived only to result in division; unity in religion was considered essential if a settled social order was to be restored and that unity had to be enforced by statute. In the words of the Act,

¹²⁵⁶ Beddard, ‘Restoration Church’, pp.155-156

¹²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p.156

¹²⁵⁸ Seaward, *Cavalier Parliament*, pp.5 and 49

¹²⁵⁹ Spurr, ‘Religion’, p.428

¹²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p.427

nothing conduceth more to the setting of the Peace of this Nation (which is desired of all good men) nor to the honour of our Religion and the propagation thereof then an universall agreement in the Publique Worshipp of Almighty God.¹²⁶¹

When it came to the revision of the *Book of Common Prayer*, Anglican Conformists, fearful of extremes, successfully resisted Presbyterian pressure by retaining a middle course, thereby rejecting anything specifically Puritan or Roman by upholding, as the 1662 Preface affirms, ‘the wisdom of the Church of England ... between the two extremes, of too much stiffness in refusing, and of too much easiness in admitting any variation from it’. Effectively this meant the established Church’s refusal to negotiate with either extreme. Also in dispute was the difficult problem of the 1662 Act’s demand for episcopal ordination. In its antipathy to avant-garde ministry Parliament was insistent that Priests and Deacons without this rite ‘shall be utterly disabled and (ipso facto) deprived of the same’.¹²⁶² For royalist legislators and high Anglican clergy, Presbyterian ordination during the previous decades was invalid. Again Hooker was enlisted in support: his voice ‘should have silenced all claims that a minister was made by his sound preaching of the Word or his ability in extemporaneous prayer’.¹²⁶³

In the event the debates were superseded by both the course of events and overruled by the decisions of Parliament. Spurr’s analysis is clear: settlement was effected by the ‘spontaneous recovery of the Church of England’, re-established in the vacuum left by the ‘cautious proceedings ... in Westminster and Whitehall’. The reclamation was headed up by the cathedral chapters, with bishops who had survived the 1640s reclaiming their sees, and clergy flocking to jobs in the cathedrals. New appointees, in the autumn of 1660, took ‘possession of their cathedrals and palaces’, and ‘Clergymen began to acquire episcopal ordination from May 1660, long before it was legally necessary’. The Ussher scheme¹²⁶⁴ was stone-walled and finally rejected by both ‘High’ Church clergy and the Cavalier Parliament, and with the issue of reordination proving a stumbling block to reconciliation, Presbyterianism was effectively sidelined as episcopal investiture into the ministry became a requirement for preferment in the national Church.¹²⁶⁵ In spite of the efforts of those supporting episcopacy, such as Jeremy Taylor and Joseph Hall,¹²⁶⁶ bishops had been

¹²⁶¹ Appendix I (c), ‘Act of Uniformity, 1662’, p.316

¹²⁶² *Ibid.*, p.320

¹²⁶³ Brydon, *Evolving Reputation*, p.94, citing L’Estrange, *Interest Mistaken*, p.78

¹²⁶⁴ See above, p.90

¹²⁶⁵ Spurr, *Restoration Church*, pp.36, and 143-145

¹²⁶⁶ See above, pp.122-124. Taylor’s *Episcopacy Asserted* was published in 1641; Hall’s *Episcopacie by Divine Right* in 1640.

excluded from Parliament by the Clergy Act of 1640.¹²⁶⁷ Two decades later, in a short space of time, they were brought back into the House of Lords when that Act was repealed by the Clergy Act of 1661. Then, in spite of every effort by Presbyterian opinion, the 1662 Uniformity Act was enacted with its consequent clergy ejections on St. Bartholomew's Day of that year. Norman Sykes sees it as a process by which 'the Presbyterians ... were bluffed out of their senses by a series of apparently favourable portents and promises, whilst their adversaries were taking possession of the church by stealth'.¹²⁶⁸ Beddard agrees: 'At times the spontaneity of Anglican recovery was phenomenal'.¹²⁶⁹

Not every historian considers the break-up in the 1660s to have been altogether tragic. G.M. Trevelyan argued that whilst 'the religious settlement of the Restoration was not conceived in the spirit of compromise ... yet it may at least be questioned whether it has not led to more religious, intellectual and political liberty'. It rendered toleration inevitable in the long term.¹²⁷⁰ Later in the century, with the passing of the Toleration Act of 1689, freedom for Nonconformist worship was eventually conceded. Nonconformity had arrived as a permanent feature of English religious life.

My evaluation of the enforcing legislation and the incentives empowering it has been necessarily limited, but this review must now consider the consequences for those who were affected.

The divergent Nonconformist responses

What was Nonconformist reaction to these institutional demands? Prescribed conformity and the consequences of non-subscription were not identical in the two periods under review and Baxter's response was markedly different from that of fellow Puritan, Perkins. It was not the intent of either to rebel against authority. Puritans such as Owen acknowledged, even as late as 1667, that the true interest of the nation rests with the government and the benefits are dependent upon obedience to its laws.

Every English-Man ... falls into it from the Womb; it grows up with him; he is indispensably engaged into it, and holds all his temporal Concernments by it, ... [and] so far as in point of Duty he ... is not at liberty to dissent from the Community. But as for Religion, it is the Choice of Men; and he that chuseth not his Religion, hath none.¹²⁷¹

Owen's nonconformist scruples were clearly faced with a dichotomy, a division of loyalties. The Christian duty was to submit to righteous authority, 'not ... to dissent from the

¹²⁶⁷ Finally passed in 1641/2

¹²⁶⁸ Sykes, *Sheldon to Secker*, p.3

¹²⁶⁹ Beddard, 'Restoration Church', p.163

¹²⁷⁰ Trevelyan, *History*, pp.450-451

¹²⁷¹ Owen, *Indulgence*, p.19

Community', to conform in all things lawful. Humility and obedience were godly virtues not to be denied, but as we have seen with the Bartholomeans, there were two demands made upon the conscientious. Obedience is due not only to the rule of Caesar but also to the decrees of God and when they contradict divine authority takes priority. Thus we have Owen's argument: 'Religion ... is the Choice of Men; and he that chuseth not his Religion, hath none'.

But how is the will of God to be known; is conscience a reliable guide? Anglicans, such as Edward Stillingfleet (1635-1689), maintained that if conscience be the arbiter then 'there can be no End of Separations, till all Men's Consciences judge alike'.¹²⁷² Separation, in the Anglican view, is itself a rejection of the demands of conscience. More seriously, it is a denial of divinely appointed oversight and a rejection of charitable union with fellow Christians. It is a sin and the offender's eternal happiness and security is put in jeopardy.¹²⁷³ The Nonconformist's retort was to insist that it was not they who were the cause of disunity; it was the legislators who were to blame. Baxter spoke for them all when, in response to Stillingfleet, he argued that the true schismatics are those that 'fabricate needless impossible dividing terms and conditions of unity and communion'.¹²⁷⁴ How can it be that 'Oaths and Subscriptions [that] the Church of old did never know' should now be imposed as a condition of communion? Are we now to be 'Silenced, Imprisoned, Confiscated [and] Banished for refusing your Oaths and Subscriptions ... These are not fit Proportions of Justice'.¹²⁷⁵

But in the late sixteenth century, Puritans had also been confronted with issues of conscience in response to the legislative demands from both Church and state. Perkins too was concerned that the Church had its faults, yet he nonetheless continued to submit to the structure of the Church, and he endorsed its doctrinal formularies. Certainly he considered the worship of many of its adherents to be formal and the teachings of some of its divines to be a denial of its principles. 'Most men ... come to the place of assemblies, ... and there mumble up the Lords prayer, the commaundements, and the beliefe in stead of prayers, which beeing done, God is well served thinke they', whereas in life 'they neglect to learne and practise such things as are taught them for their salvation by the ministers of Gods word'.¹²⁷⁶ All might seem peace and safety in the Church but conscientious principles were also under test. But Perkins came to a different conclusion when he argued,

¹²⁷² Stillingfleet, *Discourse*, p.2

¹²⁷³ Spurr, *Restoration Church*, pp.123-124

¹²⁷⁴ Baxter, *Separation*, p.82

¹²⁷⁵ Baxter, *Reliquiae*, p.254

¹²⁷⁶ Perkins, *Creed*, p.209

if we make no conscience to obey the word of God, and if we have no love of Christ and his members, God will at length remoove his candlestick from us, and utterly deprive us of this ornament of the Gospel. ... Let us therefore with all care and diligence shew forth our love both to Christ himselfe & to his members, and adorne the Gospell which we professe by bringing forth frutes worthie of it.¹²⁷⁷

With reference to the manifestation of contentious anti-Calvinist dogma, he argues, ‘wee should consider the falshood [that] sundrie Divines have devised, and in their writings published a new frame or platforme of the doctrine of Predestination’.¹²⁷⁸ Yet, in spite of the nominal formality of ‘most men’, and the perceived doctrinal deviation of some clergy, there was no intent on the part of Perkins to separate. In the last decade of the sixteenth century, at a time when contentious Puritan rhetoric was muted, Perkins remained faithful to the national Church, maintaining that whilst it had its deficiencies there were insufficient grounds for separation. ‘Our owne Churches in England ... beleeve, and maintaine, and preach the true faith, that is, the auncient doctrine of salvation by Christ, ... as the booke of the Articles of faith agreed upon in open Parliament doth fully shew’.¹²⁷⁹ He made no complaint, as evidenced in *Reformed Catholike*, against the governing Church hierarchy. There the only mention of bishops was with respect to the Bishop of Rome whose office, as Pope, he rejected. Adverse arguments against the required liturgy are few, although he did complain that it is ‘meere foolishness’ to think only prayer, the reciting of creeds, the Lord’s Prayer and the Ten Commandments are sufficient to satisfy God’s justice.¹²⁸⁰ But separation was not an option for the godly. Had Christ followed the opinions of the Separatists he would have rejected all association with the Jewish forms of worship and would ‘not so much as once to have come into the temple, or taught in their Synagogues’. On the contrary, Christ ‘joynded himselfe with them: and therefore wee cannot in good conscience disjoyne ourselves from the Church of England’.¹²⁸¹ In his fidelity as a Puritan to the Church Perkins was by no means unique. Divines such as Cartwright, Travers, Field,¹²⁸² and Bradshaw, whilst still pressing for reform, maintained their commitment to the national English Church. Their opposition to separation, or rather the reasons for their continued commitment to the Church despite institutional demands upon their conscience, needs to be examined in more detail. Given the deep-seated reservations they held, and the failure to achieve their reforming goals within the Church, what was it that held Puritans,

¹²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p.282

¹²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p.464

¹²⁷⁹ Perkins, *Creed*, p.501

¹²⁸⁰ Perkins, *Reformed Catholike*, pp.132-133

¹²⁸¹ Perkins, *Creed*, pp.203-204. See also Spinks, *Two Faces*, pp.23-24

¹²⁸² See Collinson, ‘Field’, pp.335-370

by and large, to a commitment to the Elizabethan and early Stuart Church, when in the 1660s the godly were to withdraw in their hundreds?

Addressing the question as seen from the Puritan perspective Lake has argued that, in the earlier period, among the incentives that fostered their loyalty was a strategy by which they held that the imposition of the Church's standards in government and ceremonies, though objectionable, was 'inherently indifferent'. They had an overriding duty to preach the Word, so they found ways by which they were able to swallow their scruples and subscribe.¹²⁸³ He offers a critical interpretation which maintains that, to accommodate the requirements of the Puritan conscience, a notion of 'limited or restricted conformity' began to be disseminated within the godly community in the 1570s and beyond. This was a procedure which operated by a combination of impulses whereby the bishops, looking for a quiet life, made a point of avoiding conflict, coupling that incentive with a genuine episcopal wish to maintain Protestant unity in the Church and an additional desire to retain the services of admittedly zealous, yet gifted, preachers. For the Puritan ministers their 'apparent compliance to authority' rendered their continued presence in the Church acceptable to themselves and their congregations. Lake sees this process as a 'series of nudges and winks' dependent on the discretion of the parties involved in their efforts, not always successful, not to attract the notice of the central authority:

The shared assumptions, the cross purposes, latent misunderstandings and deliberate fudges that underlay the practice were accordingly very rarely exposed to view and thus their meaning or significance is very hard to evaluate.¹²⁸⁴

In short here was a process by which either the bishops conveniently ignored a failure to conform or the Puritans conformed with tongue-in-cheek, all for the benefit and maintenance of peace in the Church and the continued preaching ministry of the godly. It was a procedure Lake argues — and as Laudian divines were later to complain — that was indeed a fudge, supported by weak and lazy bishops and hypocritical Puritans who were introducing by subterfuge a fifth column into the Church.

Collinson provides evidence that Puritan responses to the demands were less than united in their content,¹²⁸⁵ and he further advances the notion — one that Lake acknowledges — that more pragmatic motives were in operation, actions considered useful in practice, not just in theory, by which the shared religion of the Protestants sought to smooth off the rough edges of Puritan evangelical Calvinism, a process which enabled

¹²⁸³ Lake, 'Modified Subscription', p.180

¹²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p.181

¹²⁸⁵ Collinson, *Puritan Movement*, p.250

them to integrate into what remained anyway an essentially Reformed mainstream in the Church,¹²⁸⁶ with its Calvinism articulated in the 1595 Lambeth Articles. Faced with the ‘collapse of their campaign to remould the national Church’ and with further reformation of the Church unachievable, Puritans, mostly rejecting the option of separation, made tacit withdrawal, which Collinson describes as a ‘quiet and unobserved revolution’ at local level, ‘one which would in time effect changes in English Society quite as profound as those ever dreamed of by the Presbyterians’.¹²⁸⁷ Whilst this view of the long term outcome is no doubt accurate, Walsham is at pains to point out that it is ‘vital to realise that there was a whole spectrum of positions between resistance and compromise.’ She argues that the boundaries between Conformity and Nonconformity were not fixed even for the individual. Whilst some dissenters

made only the slightest gesture of compliance with the requirements of [both] the Tudor and Stuart state, others almost completely disguised themselves as orthodox members of their parish communities, outwardly behaving in accordance with the various Acts of Uniformity but inwardly espousing a completely different set of beliefs ... Individuals moved easily between various degrees of separation and detachment from the established Church.¹²⁸⁸

The force of these arguments is acknowledged, but alone they do not provide an adequate explanation. Indeed in my view the suggestion that the Puritans, let alone the bishops, were in response to rigid legislative and ecclesial orders open to deviousness, intrigue, and pragmatic responses, is at least questionable given their rigorous pursuit of ‘godliness’; these analyses fail to take sufficient account of the conscientious idealism which drove Puritan and orthodox responses. There is more here than a disingenuous nod and wink exemplified in Lake’s suggestion that attempts were being made to keep the peace in ‘the murky transactions that formed the practice of modified subscription’.¹²⁸⁹ Moreover, Walsham herself makes the point that historians are prone to overlook the genuine efforts made by episcopal and clerical authorities at conciliation and arbitration prior to any administration of punitive sanctions, a process ‘that involved give and take on both sides.’ She maintains that ‘a degree of strategic and temporary leniency was explicitly built into the ecclesiastical procedures designed to bring about uniformity with the established Church’. We would do well, she argues, to ‘focus less on the [suggested] “weakness” and “hypocrisy” of the dissidents and concentrate more on amicable persuasion, on the exercise of ‘discretion and flexibility’ by those having authority in the Church, a procedure which was not always devoid of success in achieving its intended goal, that of restoring the

¹²⁸⁶ Lake, ‘Modified Subscription’, p.181 citing Collinson, *Religion of Protestants*, though no page number given

¹²⁸⁷ Collinson, *Puritan Movement*, pp.432-433

¹²⁸⁸ Walsham, *Charitable Hatred*, p.188

¹²⁸⁹ Lake, ‘Modified Subscription’, p.182

disobedient.¹²⁹⁰ More selfless motivations, commitments both to their Church and to their ministry, I suggest can be seen, on both sides, to have been at work.

Not the least of the factors which helped stabilise the Church was indeed shared doctrine: agreement over dogma can cement together those diverging over other issues: church government, ceremonies and liturgy. Shared Calvinist teaching — albeit in varying shades of orthodoxy — accepted by both Puritan and Conformist had the effect of holding them together. The emergence of Arminianism was in its early stages and was contested by both Puritan and Conformist alike, including the episcopate. Of more forceful significance in Lake's analyses, in my view, is his acknowledgement of the retained unity amongst Puritans themselves. In a context in which he considers Puritan opinion was no obstacle to integration into the Elizabethan Church, links between Presbyterians and non-Presbyterians, between radical and moderate Puritans, were retained despite differences, this in recognition of their joint commitment to their Protestant faith.¹²⁹¹ This was a unity which was to be forfeited by Puritanism in the next century.

Another prime reason for Elizabethan Puritans to remain committed to the Church was a concern for the inadequacy of its ministry: they saw themselves as a minority, surrounded by parishes where the preaching was either insufficient or non-existent. Their calling was to fulfil that ministry, to preach the Gospel at every opportunity, and separation would be a denial of that calling: a desertion both of their responsibility and of their flocks. Their overriding obligation was to address the depravity to be found in society both within and outside the Church. Perkins again:

We must take notice of the common sinne of our times. For in the practise of our religion we are deceived. We are not now that which we have bin twentie or thirtie yeares agoe. For now we see the world abounds with Atheists, Epicures, libertines, worldlings, newters, that are of no religion.¹²⁹²

Underscoring all was the Puritan's inherent aversion to schism and their sense of national obligation. Their perceived calling, as Walsham has demonstrated in her work on 'providentialism' in the English context, was to warn of the dangers of national apostasy with its consequent threat of heavenly vengeance.¹²⁹³ As godly preachers they saw themselves as 'the direct heirs and successors of Isaiah, Micah, and other Old Testament remembrancers, specially commissioned to deliver a stern and timely rebuke' to a stiff-necked and obstinate people in danger of squandering England's providential inheritance as

¹²⁹⁰ Walsham, *Charitable Hatred*, p.248

¹²⁹¹ Lake, *Moderate Puritans*, pp.280-282

¹²⁹² Perkins, *Galatians*, p.167

¹²⁹³ Walsham, *Providence*, p.283

the chosen people of God.¹²⁹⁴ To separate would be to forfeit that opportunity; Separation, in the Elizabethan and early Stuart context, was unacceptable to their conscience, even for the convinced Presbyterian; their integrity would not permit it. Throughout Elizabeth's reign the threat of a resurgent Catholicism remained and, however strong may have been the demands made upon their principles, with all its failings the Church of England was *the* Church, and the Prince was appointed by God to rule. Their own God-given calling was to minister to 'the Church' which, for everyday commitments, was their congregation. The Church institution they continued to recognise as valid, God's instrument, particularly in its local parish setting. To desert this Church would not only render them disobedient to God and unlawful, a rejection of the authority of the magistrate, it would additionally mean a break in the unity they held with fellow Christians, and as such a rejection of God's authority expressed in Scripture's requirement to maintain unity. As Cross describes it, the arguments that had so absorbed the likes of Cartwright and Whitgift twenty years earlier had, by the 1590s, 'given way to a more pacific school of writers who put far more emphasis on practical Puritan piety'. Amongst these writers she includes Perkins.¹²⁹⁵

Perkins, in spite of his Puritanism and endorsement of Bezan Calvinist doctrine, was prepared to side with the Conformist; he remained loyal to the structure and authority of the Church of England. He considered the theology of his English Church to be orthodox and faithful: 'Wee hold, beleeeve, and maintaine, and preach the true faith, that is, the auncient doctrine of salvation by Christ'.¹²⁹⁶ What incentive could there be to separate? Breward maintains that with the passage of time Perkins's anti-separatist convictions became firmer. He castigated the sectaries 'who cannot see that the Church of England is a goodly heap of God's corn', and he insisted that the *Book of Common Prayer* was both necessary and profitable, including its set forms of prayer.¹²⁹⁷ His concern was not to express opposition to episcopacy's authority and the existing order but rather 'to correct the pastoral deficiencies of the Church of England [he] loved', this consequent upon his conviction of the 'Christian's obligation to be obedient to the magistrate'.¹²⁹⁸ F.D. Price, reviewing Breward's introduction to his edition of Perkins's works, highlights Perkins's sense of obligation to the established Church and his fear of sectarian strife. His concern was for his flock:

¹²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.286

¹²⁹⁵ Cross, *Church and People*, p.141

¹²⁹⁶ Perkins, *Creed*, p.501

¹²⁹⁷ Breward, 'Introduction', p.12, citing Perkins, *Workes*, III pp.119-120, and 425

¹²⁹⁸ Breward, 'Introduction', p.20

Instead of seeking as a first step the imposition of the discipline as a means to reformation of the laity, he taught the necessity of beginning with the spiritual awakening of the individual. The reformed church would grow from the reformed society.

Breward had emphasized Perkins's important influence within the Church of England, a stimulus which helped it to 'hold together different traditions in such a creative tension that they mutually enriched one another'.¹²⁹⁹

How different was the attitude in the next century of someone like Samuel Slater, ejected from his lectureship at Bury St. Edmunds on account of his Nonconformist views.¹³⁰⁰ Ironically, he was given to citing Perkins in his aggressive stance against toleration of error. Preaching to Richard Cromwell in 1658, he argued — whilst extolling the efforts of the biblical Josiah, 'who wrought a glorious Reformation' in Judah and Jerusalem — that those in authority should be 'purging out superstition, extirpating errors ... beating down prophaneness ... [thereby] setting up the pure worship of God'.¹³⁰¹ Did not Perkins maintain that 'it is not lawful to grant any man or people the liberty of their own conscience in matters of Religion, permitting them to profess what Religion they will; for if this be allowed, how should false prophets be avoided?'¹³⁰² For Slater, toleration was 'cursed and abominable' and not to be endured, and he suffered the consequences of his inflexibility. By contrast, strong though their reservations were, for Perkins and Bradshaw, half a century earlier, separation was the greater evil, never the preferred option. In answer to the question 'at what time a man may with good conscience make separation from a Church', he answers, 'so long as a Church makes no separation from Christ, wee must make no separation from it': that was the rule in Perkins's judgement.¹³⁰³ Those that have separated are schismatics, since 'our Churches faile not either in ... doctrine, or in ... the true worship of God'.¹³⁰⁴

Returning to Bradshaw, he was himself a Cambridge Puritan, also grounded in his theology under Laurence Chaderton, Master of Emmanuel College. Whilst maintaining that the Church's ceremonies as required by the Church's hierarchy were ungodly and idolatrous, he aligned with Perkins's opposition to Separatism, maintaining that Puritans were willing to suffer submissively for their beliefs in their denial of schism.¹³⁰⁵ Bradshaw was ordained in 1599 yet spent most of his life at variance with ecclesiastical and university

¹²⁹⁹ Price, 'Review', p.408

¹³⁰⁰ See above, p.191

¹³⁰¹ Slater, *Protectors Protection*, p.26, and Benedict, 'Slater'

¹³⁰² Slater, *Protectors Protection*, p.30, giving no source reference

¹³⁰³ Perkins, *Creed*, p.502

¹³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p.503

¹³⁰⁵ Sissons, 'Introduction', '[p.3]'

authorities for his resistance to strict conformity, consistently advocating a parish discipline based on non-Separatist congregationalism within the Church of England.¹³⁰⁶ During the later years of his life he denounced Separatism, publishing *The Unreasonableness of the Separation* in 1614, arguing that the godly should remain in communion with the national church provided it be 'in that forme and manner, which the law in the true meaning thereof, prescribes, & which many at the least doe practis'.¹³⁰⁷ Against charges that the established Church ministry was unlawful (in the biblical sense), Bradshaw took a pragmatic view, insisting that at the parish level the 'present Ministry ... is the same Ministry which Christ hath set in his Church'. Whilst the oversight of prelates occasionally became involved, effectively the clergy, whilst they might be labelled 'priests and deacons', were so in name only; in fact they exercised the essentials of the biblical ministry of pastors and teachers.

Significantly an expanded version of his book was published in 1640 with additional arguments introduced by Bradshaw's friend Thomas Gataker (1574-1654), this in response to *Necessitie of Separation* (1634), published by the Fifth Monarchist Independent, John Canne (d. 1667?). Canne rejected the assertion that the ministry of the Church of England could be equated with the 'Apostolique primitive institution'.¹³⁰⁸ The 'highest ordinarie Ecclesiasticall Officer in any true constituted visible church of Christ', he maintained, is the pastor who was, in his terminology, the bishop. Canne was adamant that the offices of the national Church could not be countenanced: they 'disagreeth, in every particular' with Scripture, and 'to communicate in a false ministry is ... unacceptable altogether to the Lord'.¹³⁰⁹ On those issues Canne felt constrained to separate: dogma had overcome the incentive to remain united in fellowship.

Thus the polemical contrast, with the passage of time, was becoming significant so that by 1640 those Puritans whose conviction was to remain within the Church of England were coming under increasing pressure from strident Nonconformist and Separatist discourses. One Puritan to retain his loyalty was John Ball (1585-1640), said to be a man of humble and peaceable spirit, who made his contribution against outright separation in *A Friendly Triall* (1640), a piece intended 'to satisfie the doubtfull, recall the wandring, and to strengthen the weak'.¹³¹⁰ In it he sought to defend the *Book of Common Prayer* and with it the

¹³⁰⁶ See Lake's chapter on 'William Bradshaw: moderation in extremity' in Lake, *Moderate Puritans*, pp.262-278

¹³⁰⁷ Gregory, 'Bradshaw', and Bradshaw, *Unreasonableness*, sig. B1r

¹³⁰⁸ Canne, *Necessitie of Separation*, p.1

¹³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.11, and 26-27

¹³¹⁰ Ball, *A Friendly Triall*, title page, and Sutton, 'Ball'

use of set forms of prayer in a ‘stinted’¹³¹¹ Liturgie’. Admittedly there were grave defects in Church discipline. Indeed, he argued, it is a thing ‘to be lamented with tears of blood, that the body and blood of our Saviour Christ should be profaned’ when notorious and profane offenders are admitted to the Lord’s Table. Yet even such blind blasphemies are not ground enough for ‘private persons to ... excommunicate themselves’.¹³¹² This was a leniency in Church discipline unacceptable to Baxter, in spite of his desire for unity. Ball’s complaint against the Separatists was that they claimed that the ‘power of the keys’ rests with ‘the community of the faithfull, ... it pertaineth to them to censure offenders’. On the contrary, said Ball, the power to discipline ‘is given by Jesus Christ, ... to the church-governours whom he hath appointed to rule and feed his flock in his name, and to whom they must give account’.¹³¹³ That assertion Baxter accepted as a principle, but the difficulty was that those so appointed to rule either failed to exercise discipline or, at the parish level, had no power to exercise it under the Church’s hierarchical structure.

Returning to the sixteenth century, Cartwright, in spite of his justified reputation as ‘a disaffected and radical critic of the ecclesiastical *status quo*’, resisted pressures to separate. Here is an example of a dedicated Puritan, ‘the true progenitor of English presbyterianism’; who was to spend twenty years abroad and three years in prison for his views,¹³¹⁴ who yet remained a member of the established Church. Cartwright, although opposed to separation, was loath to express his resistance in print. Lake argues that whilst Puritans in Elizabeth’s reign placed considerable emphasis on their opposition to popery, their condemnation of separation was treated with reservation given the evident link between the principles of Presbyterianism and Separatism. Anxious as they were to avoid the breakdown of authority over extreme tendencies inherent in Separatism, moderate Puritans, in their disapproval of schism, were reluctant to repudiate the standing of more radical associates, men whose motives and principles were nearly identical to their own, when at the same time they were convinced that their Church was far from perfect.¹³¹⁵ Further, to argue that the issues at stake were non-essentials would be directly to undermine their own arguments for the essential need for further reform. It was Cartwright’s reaction to such pressures that results in his being classified by Lake as a moderate Puritan, this in spite of the intensity of his polemic in his public role as an advocate of the English Presbyterian movement.

¹³¹¹ ‘stinted’, fixed or limited by authority or decree; appointed, set, *OED*

¹³¹² Ball, *A Friendly Triall*, Preface, unpaginated

¹³¹³ *Ibid.*

¹³¹⁴ Collinson, ‘Cartwright’

¹³¹⁵ Lake, *Moderate Puritans*, pp.77-79

Evidence of Cartwright's opposition to Separatism is to be found in two private letters which are, by contrast, pastoral in their approach, aiming 'simply to win over two misguided but well-intentioned zealots to the cause of true religion'.¹³¹⁶ The first of these letters, addressed to Robert Harrison a Separatist minister and Middleburg exile, was eventually published in 1673, in a pamphlet in which Cartwright's arguments were reproduced together with — by way of comparison — the later ideas of Baxter.¹³¹⁷ Cartwright understood Harrison's dread of association with the Church of England, a Church where the laws of the land justify a 'dumb ministry'. 'Your fear', Cartwright wrote, is that 'in uniting your selves with such, you should be unequally yoked, and made fellow members of some other than of that whereof Christ Jesus is the Head'.¹³¹⁸ Cartwright's response was to insist that in local congregations those assemblies that have Christ as their head and foundation are God's Church. The members of such churches 'are lively stones laid upon him [Christ] as upon a foundation, and grow into one spiritual house with him. Now that they have like precious faith with us, is convinced [is demonstrated?], not onely by their own profession, but by the testimony of the Spirit of God'.¹³¹⁹ The local congregation, faithful in Word, sacrament and discipline, is a valid Church, and with it the bonds of unity cannot be denied. Harrison might argue that a Church with a 'dumb Minister' is worse than one with none at all, but, Cartwright countered, how can it be said that an assembly that yesterday had a profitable ministry is rendered today the 'Synagogue of Satan' because a dumb minister has been appointed?¹³²⁰ Cartwright's concern is for the people of God. Separation might salve the conscience of the shepherd but will leave the sheep without any pastoral care. Recorded in the same pamphlet is the delighted, if cynical, response of Bancroft to Cartwright's arguments:

It most of all pleaseth me to see, how Master Cartwright draweth homeward. ... assuredly the phrenetical giddiness of these our new unbrideled Schismatics, ... hath wrought a miracle (to my understanding) upon M. Cartwright.

Bancroft blamed Cartwright for breeding these troublesome schismatics, yet found himself hoping

that he would in short time, leave the Disciplinary walls of Geneva, and content himself with the ancient fortifications of the Church of England; and the rather, because he seeth what a

¹³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.80

¹³¹⁷ Cartwright, *Judgement*

¹³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.2

¹³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.2-3

¹³²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.5

giddy and itching humour his novelties have bred, in the unstayed sort of many fantastical people.¹³²¹

Open to suspicion though the Presbyterian's motives might have been, there is no suggestion here from the Archbishop that Cartwright should have been ejected from the Church for his subversive views.

There is a further letter from Cartwright, dated August 30, 1590.¹³²² This letter was written in response to one dated January 12, 1589/90 from his sister-in-law which has on it the endorsement: 'A letter of one Anne Stubbe, a notable Barrowiste as it shuld seeme'.¹³²³ Stubbe accused her brother-in-law of a presumptuous and wilful breach of the law of God. 'You are not the Church of God by Agreement of his worde in that you obey not, but resist the voyce of Christ',¹³²⁴ which was the very complaint Cartwright raised against those he opposed in the national Church. Her argument was the same as in Cartwright's dispute with Whitgift: 'I say the word of God containeth the direction of all things, pertaining to the Church, yea, of whatsoever things can fall into any part of a man's life'. Obedience to God equates with obedience to Scripture, but, in Stubbe's view, Cartwright's disobedience to that rule condemns him eternally: 'the worde of God is plaine, [and] he that obeyeth not the sonne shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him'.¹³²⁵

Apparently, Cartwright was, in her view, in breach of God's ordinance insofar as he adhered to a Church which failed to appoint ministers 'by the free choice of the people of God', this selection process to be unanimous. Cartwright's assertion that the Church of England's validity was recognised by continental Reformed Churches was, according to Stubbe, no more than 'the praise of men and not of God'. In the Church's episcopal structure, the power to discipline rests with the bishops and their courts, which is 'the power of Antichrist', a disciplinary procedure whose structure Cartwright could not deny, only arguing that the local minister had power to admonish.¹³²⁶ At every turn, Stubbe charged Cartwright with disobedience to the Word of God, which is an ironic accusation given Cartwright's insistence that all be done in the Church in strict submission to the teaching of Scripture. Cartwright's retort was to ask, 'Who are you that judge your brother?' 'We pr[o]fesse that we doe herein according to that we are p[er]swaded out of the Word'.¹³²⁷ On both sides what was being demanded was adherence to their respective

¹³²¹ *Ibid.*, Preface

¹³²² British Library, Harleian MS 7581, fols 50v-56v, printed in Peel and Carlson, *Cartwrightiana*, pp.63-75

¹³²³ British Library, Additional MS 29546, fol. 117r, v, printed in Peel and Carlson, *Cartwrightiana*, pp.60-63

¹³²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.60

¹³²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.61

¹³²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.60-61

¹³²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.64

interpretations of Scripture. Two individuals, related not only by family ties but also by their shared Christian faith, were divided by their individual emphases in interpretation. The problem is precisely mirrored when we analyse the disputes that separated Cartwright and Whitgift, but the essential difference was that their disagreements did not cause Cartwright to defect from the Church.

Stubbe's repudiation of Cartwright's standing as a fellow Christian was offensive to him. Even if it were true that he had not always obeyed the voice of Christ, does that bar him from the Church? If a wife fails to obey her husband, does that make her no longer his wife? Stubbe might argue that the Church of England was no Church because it failed to exercise biblical discipline, but is a rich earl no longer rich because he does not spend his money? 'St Paule doth not crosse out the name of the Corinthians' for their failure to excommunicate 'the incestuous person', he argued.¹³²⁸ Stubbe's argument that the Church of England had no free election of its ministers he repudiated, claiming that her Church had no effective ministry at all, 'for there is not so much as one amongst [*sic*] you that is fit for the function of ye mynistrye'.¹³²⁹

We are bound to wonder how it can be that these two individuals — evidently both fervent in their Christianity, a faith which for both arose 'out of the Word which we both professe to be ruled by'¹³³⁰ — fail to acknowledge the essential and central persuasions that would have bound them together had they taken the trouble to examine them. Instead, they argue about and divide on doctrinal issues of detail, each judging the other to be excluded from the 'Church' as they understood it, this for their alleged failure to obey that Word. Here we have an extreme version of the tragic consequences to Christian unity, the failure of believers to recognise their common Christian faith in their dogmatic reliance on their own factional opinions.

Finally let us consider Travers, Cartwright's close Presbyterian associate: he also remained faithful to the established Church although his ministry suffered in difficult circumstances. In 1594 he was appointed Provost of Trinity College, Dublin, an uncompromisingly Protestant institution, just three years after its foundation. There he took an active part in teaching and reading the Latin lecture in Divinity in term time. One of his scholars was Ussher who took notes of the sermons Travers preached in the college chapel. Faced with rebellions in Ireland and increasing financial constraints in the new

¹³²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.66

¹³²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.67

¹³³⁰ *Ibid.*, p.74

University, Travers resigned his post in October 1598.¹³³¹ He returned to England to a life of obscurity, to a country in which Presbyterianism had declined as an influence. Whilst remaining a Nonconformist in conviction he did not separate from the national Church, publishing at the age of eighty-two, just five years before his death, *Vindiciae Ecclesiae Anglicanae* (1630), a book written in defence of the Church of England against recusants. With the passing of the years, Travers may have mellowed in his opinions, but in this publication, in which he argued against Separatism, he expressed his ‘satisfaction in the particular points of our Religion now professed in England’. This is founded on ‘two books established by publique and highest authority, ... the booke of the Articles of Christian Religion agreed in Convocation ... 1562. ... The other is the booke of divine Service and Common Prayer wherein is set downe the whole order whereby we serve God publicly in our Churches’.¹³³² This is a work published at the height of Laudian counter-reforming activities, and it demonstrates his overriding loyalty to the national Church. Knox argues that Travers’s principal desire in his later years was not for a separated ‘true’ church discipline, but rather for purity of doctrine within the Church: ‘he was evidently more of a Protestant than a Presbyterian’.¹³³³ Separatism for Travers was a system which had ‘a semblance of the proper discipline, but their separate congregations did not express the integration of the church, or the closely knit authoritarianism of the body of Christ which [he, and] Cartwright, and other presbyterian spokesmen desired’.¹³³⁴

Puritan clerics in the late Elizabethan period could be numbered in their hundreds rather than thousands, and in spite of the weakening of their influence and their failure to achieve the changes they thought essential in a truly Reformed Church very few elected to separate. When the Church was accused by Separatists of error, loyal Puritans maintained their own insistence on purity of doctrine and practice, but not at the expense of Christian unity, nor would they contemplate a desertion of their calling to care for the people of God under their charge. Perkins’s response to Separatist allegations was to ask whether these supposed deviations were truly errors of doctrine, or merely ‘manner’? Are the doctrinal errors ‘against the foundation’? Perkins insisted that ‘it cannot be shewed that in our Churches is taught any one error that raceth [razes?] the foundation, and consequently annihilateth [*sic*] the truth of Gods Church’.¹³³⁵ Perkins exposed the heart of the incentives that bound Conformists and Puritans together. In spite of their differences all were agreed

¹³³¹ Knox, *Walter Travers*, pp.128-135

¹³³² Travers, *Vindiciae*, pp.3-4

¹³³³ Knox, *Walter Travers*, p.146

¹³³⁴ *Ibid.*, p.151

¹³³⁵ Perkins, *Creed*, p.501

on the need for the preaching of the Word, the administration of the sacraments and church discipline. Differences about the manner of executing these ideologies within the Church were considered to be non-essential. 'Therefore men on both parts, ... because both hold Christ the foundation, they still remaine brethren and true members of Christ'.¹³³⁶ Their common faith in Christ was the bond that held them together, and for them to divide would have been an invalidation of their Christian profession.

In summary, my contention is that the legislative processes envisaged, and even enacted in the late 1500s, were as severe in their intentions as those of the 1660s. For reasons I have sought to enumerate they did not result in division. Strict and universal implementation was prevented by factors brought to bear upon the legislators by both circumstances and lay pressure and, not the least, by their own desire for peaceful settlement in the Church. On the side of those who were the objects of the regulation, pastoral convictions overcame those similar issues of conscience which in the next century were to cause division. In the writings of Perkins we find evidence of an increased commitment to an imperative obligation, which is mirrored in the writings of Bradshaw, Travers, and Cartwright, to uphold the purity of the Church's teaching and ministry, and their 'love for Christ ... and to his members', and in so doing to 'adorne the Gospell which we professe'.¹³³⁷ The higher priority, even above the incentive for reformation of the Church, was the reformation of men's hearts: that was their prime calling. Contention should be laid aside in a resolve to foster edification in the Church, not divide it, which would prove counter-productive.¹³³⁸

This was not a motivation which the ejected of the 1660s could accept: conscience, operating in a different way, was to override commitment, and this incentive can be seen in the contradictions facing the Bartholomeans. I maintain that the sermons, as we have inherited them, give a fair reflection of the dichotomy facing them by stringent secular legislation. They repetitively raise the issue of 'conscience'; scruples were being subjected to threat, but convictions were not to be denied. Christian ideologies are subject to divided loyalties, secular and divine. The Biblical requirement is clear: 'Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God'.¹³³⁹ How did the Bartholomeans observe this apostolic demand in their refusal to subscribe to the

¹³³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.502

¹³³⁷ *Ibid.*, p.282

¹³³⁸ Breward, 'Introduction', p.22

¹³³⁹ Romans 13: 1-2a

Uniformity Act, for in their overriding submission to the will of God they insisted, along with the apostle Peter, ‘we ought to obey God rather than men’?¹³⁴⁰ I am suggesting that, in their refusal to conform they were following Christ’s dictum to submit both to ‘Caesar’ and to God. The divine maxim enabled the Bartholmeans to draw together apparently opposing demands: obedience to God and to secular authority. Obey in every respect the authentic laws and regulations drawn up by those who have a legitimate right. Refuse any obligations required contrary to conscience and the Word of God, but, having done that, the requirement remains: suffer the consequences of that refusal obediently, at whatever cost. The absence of rancour and recrimination in these sermons is evidence of a desire to put such principles into practice. Given the conviction that God’s authority has supremacy, the conscience of hundreds required them to refuse subscription, and they paid the price without rebellion. Those that did subscribe and remained in the Church also saw it as their conscientious commitment to maintain their ministry; they conformed in order to be true to their calling, and for the sake of their congregations. To be faithful to God meant, for them, being faithful to the people of God, not their own private scruples. Many in the 1660s accepted that conviction and did subscribe, but for the ejected the call of God upon their conscience was not to be denied.

But division, when it occurred in the seventeenth century, was not only caused by the uncompromising strength of Nonconformist opinion. The force of dissent was confronted by a solid wall of dogmatic Anglican intransigence now supported by the power of institutional authority, and it is their reaction to the arguments of their opponents we now consider.

No compromise: the Anglican reflex

The laxity in the implementation of regulation in the late sixteenth century which assisted the nonconforming clergy in achieving their desire to remain within the Church was not to be repeated in the 1660s. Non-subscribers were no longer accepted, comprehension was resisted, and toleration was rejected by establishment administration, both civil and ecclesiastical. The return to influence and power of ‘Laudian’ or ‘high’ churchmen such as Sheldon, Cosin, and Wren gave support to legally enforced requirements to conform to the formularies and canons of the Church imposed with no comprehension permitted for the conscience of dissent.¹³⁴¹

¹³⁴⁰ Acts 5: 29

¹³⁴¹ Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*, p.306

There could be no return to the horrors of the previous decades. The arch-royalist and intransigent Sheldon, directly refuting the republicanism and free commonwealth advocated by Milton, recalled with horror the mismanagement of the past twenty years: 'Lord! what English man ... can without sighs, and briny tears, consider, and recollect in his mind, what this Nation was formerly, [prior to 1640] and what now it is [in 1660] ... [We] are now become the scorne of our neighbours'. In the 1640s and 1650s,

our Kingdome was divided, rent and tottering, one part against the other, the Son envying, and betraying the Father, and one Brother another, so that there was neither peace nor truth among us. Our Church also was broken almost to pieces with Schismes, Factions and Heresies, our profession scandalized, with damnable Errors and Blasphemies, so that we had scarce the face of a true Church left among us.¹³⁴²

His objective is clear, the only way to 'restore and settle these three once flourishing, now languishing, broken, & almost ruined nations' was by loyalty and obedience to the Crown. Spurr summarises him with precision: 'iron had entered Sheldon's soul'.¹³⁴³ All dissention in both the nation and the Church had to be brought forcefully into line. There could be no exceptions to the rule; all those refusing to yield were to be dealt with ruthlessly:

Tis only a resolute execution of the law that must cure this disease ... [it is] necessary that they who will not be governed as men by reason and persuasions should be goverened as beasts by power and force.¹³⁴⁴

Even the moderate Conformist Gauden, now Bishop of Worcester, was certain that the Act of Uniformity was modest in its intent to 'preserve and restore the happiness of Church and State,' and he appealed to the 'Consciences of sober men, who live within sight of the great day of the Revelation'. Are they not to be 'guided by the word of God, which sayes expressly ... Submit your selves to every Ordinance of man for the Lords sake', and 'obey them that are over you in the Lord, & submit your selves'?¹³⁴⁵ To neglect due obedience to the Act is a sin and their opposition is a rejection of the Oath of Supremacy with its sworn declaration to assist and obey the King as supreme governor of the realm. Unhappy are those who refuse obedience when in the past they had required it of others:

You that disown Authority in matters of Religion, did not you exercise it? You that repine at the imposing of the Liturgy, did not you impose the Directory? You that are troubled for deprivation upon Non-subscription, did not you turn out holy, pious, painfull Ministers, because they durst not take the Covenant, or subscribe the Engagement? ... The same measure that you measured out to others, shall be measured to you.¹³⁴⁶

¹³⁴² [Sheldon], *Answer to Milton*, pp.10, and 180-181

¹³⁴³ Spurr, *Restoration Church*, p.47

¹³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, citing Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Carte 45, fol. 151

¹³⁴⁵ Gauden, *Considerations*, pp.16-17, 1 Peter 2: 13 and Hebrews 13: 17

¹³⁴⁶ Gauden, *Considerations*, pp.18-19

Such intolerance of dissent is not only evidence of ‘Anglicans and royalists ... determined to get their revenge for the humiliation they felt they had suffered’ in the previous twenty years.¹³⁴⁷ It is also indicative of an abhorrence of a culture riven with division and instability. A settled and peaceful society required unity, and if this could not be obtained by willing submission then it would be achieved by coercion, uniformity imposed by rigid structures of state control and religious observance. Resurgent royalist and Anglican sympathisers in the Cavalier Parliament were determined to restore the political stability that had been squandered in a falsely conceived objective of individual liberty. Society had to be governed by a strong rule of law established under Crown and Parliament, religion by the imperative that conscience should be instructed by the Church under the direction of a diocesan episcopate, the sovereign arbiters in matters of faith and religious practice. In the event the outcome was by no means certain, for not all M.P.s were willing to give support to the wholesale suppression of nonconformity.¹³⁴⁸ Nonetheless the strength of influential and determined Anglican royalists whose ‘dislike of presbyterianism had both religious and political roots’, was sufficient to ensure the defeat of all attempts at accommodation even for moderate Presbyterians, both in the drawing up of the Uniformity Act and in subsequent attempts at conciliation. Nonconformists were perceived to be driven ‘not out of genuine conscience, but out of spiritual pride’, and memories of the part played by Presbyterians in the Civil Wars, with all the resulting confusion in Church and state, were still vividly in the mind; they had rebelled once and they might well do so again. There could be no compromise.¹³⁴⁹

The king, ostensibly an advocate of toleration to be extended to those of tender conscience, yet gave support to the rigid designs of Parliament in May, 1662. Addressing its ‘Lords and Gentlemen’ as wise patriots, he observed that in spite of

the most signal indulgence and condescensions, the temporary suspension of the rigour of former Laws, hath not produced that effect which was expected. [Therefore] you have prepared sharper Laws and penalties, to contend with those refractory persons, and to break that stubbornnesse which will not bend to gentler applications. ... It is great reason, that they upon whom clemency cannot prevail, should feel that severity they have provoked ... well knowing that the Application of these Remedies, the execution of these sharp Laws depends upon the wisdom of the most discerning, generous, and mercifull Prince.¹³⁵⁰

¹³⁴⁷ Coward, *Stuart Age*, p.289

¹³⁴⁸ Seaward gives evidence of the closeness of some of the voting in Parliament in his detailed survey of the circumstances surrounding Parliamentary religious legislation in the early 1660s; Seaward, *Cavalier Parliament*, pp.162-195, specifically, p.193

¹³⁴⁹ Seaward, *Cavalier Parliament*, pp.193-194

¹³⁵⁰ Charles II, *Gracious Speech*, 1662, pp.10-11

Any intention that this ‘most discerning, generous, and mercifull Prince’ might have entertained of granting tolerance and comprehension towards his nonconformist subjects, of implementing intentions expressed in the Declaration of Breda, was to prove ineffective in the application of his Parliament’s legislation. In the Church, a bitter Sheldon was having no truck with rebellion whilst an intransigent majority in the country, in government, and in Parliament were to remain firm in their resolve.¹³⁵¹ For those Conformists who had grudgingly followed the strictures imposed prior to 1660 there was no problem: they could cast away the *Directory* and return to their beloved prayer book liturgy. But more tender consciences were faced now with an impasse, their convictions and their beliefs were confronted with an opposing ideology that had the backing of authority. Confronted with the determination of those in power to enforce the rule of law and to abjure all radical change their only course was either to conform, as some did, or stand on principle and accept the consequences. For many neither Church nor state institutions were acceptable as final arbiters in matters of conscience and for this conviction they were willing to pay the price.

It is perhaps pertinent to ask whether the split in English Christendom would ever have occurred had the 1662 Uniformity Act not been passed. Given the affront to conscience that this legislation directly imposed, there is every reason to suppose that in its absence, for many Nonconformists, there would not have had an irresistible reason to separate. But then, the force of Conformist convictions was equally as strong. What would the Anglican reaction have been had nothing been done to bring Presbyterians and their associates into line? Given their abhorrence of the events over previous decades, would they have been prepared to continue association in the Church on an equal footing with those who continued to engage in deviant practices and persuasions? Possibly not, but whether these initial conclusions are an accurate assessment must be a matter for future research and speculation.

Evidence of the opinions and actions of both sides in the religious dissensions that manifested themselves in both centuries we have now explored at some length. It is worthy of note that the most visible evidence of contention and division is to be found almost entirely among the clergy, directly engaged as they were in the debates. It could well make a profitable extension to this project to investigate to what extent the ordained ministry was supported or opposed in their controversial stances by the laity, by society in general, and particularly by those who occupied the pews in the churches to which they ministered.

¹³⁵¹ Beddard, ‘Restoration Church’, pp.161-162

Exploring these fascinating questions must be for another day: it is time to draw together my conclusions regarding early modern religious discord, and finally to make a number of related observations regarding divisive issues that threaten the Church and its ministry in our own time.

Chapter 9

Conclusions and Observations

It is necessary to seek penitently and realistically for the source of the tendency to endless fissiparation which has characterised Protestantism in its actual history.

Lesslie Newbigin¹³⁵²

The authority of Scripture is not ... in dispute. The same Scriptures are acknowledged and venerated by either side. Our battle is about the meaning of Scripture.

Desiderius Erasmus¹³⁵³

Conclusions

In this research project it has been my purpose to study the nature of religious dissention and division in English Christendom in the later decades of the sixteenth century and on into the seventeenth century, up to and including the ‘Great Ejection’ of the 1660s. The principal questions that I have addressed centre on the cause of that rift: what was it that made it imperative for such a large body of devout Christians to leave the Church of England when similar pressures at the end of the sixteenth century largely failed to undermine fidelity to the national Church among Christian believers. The desire has been, in this process, to arrive at meaningful conclusions given the related ‘endless fissiparation’¹³⁵⁴ that has afflicted the Church ever since, in particular among English-speaking Protestants.

In pursuing this objective, I have sought to determine the critical incentives which underscored and stimulated religious contention in the periods under consideration. Dominating the historiographical interpretations I have assessed is the view that it was conflicting conceptions of the structure, government, and forms of worship of the English national Church that were at the heart of the divisions that ultimately caused so many clergymen to be ejected, or to secede, from it. There is certainly evidence for this. The records of the debates and conferences by which the parties sought a compromise are weighted with discussion on the form — if any — that episcopacy should take, what constitutes a valid ordination, and the form and content of the liturgy and ceremonies that should be required by the Prayer Book.

¹³⁵² Newbigin, *Household*, p.54

¹³⁵³ Erasmus, ‘Freedom of the Will’, p.43

¹³⁵⁴ Newbigin, *Household*, p.54

But these convictions about the structure of the Church and the use, or rejection, of liturgies were not plucked out of the air. I have argued that these concepts were accentuated by persuasions about the nature of the Church, the means of grace, the form and extent of divine revelation, and the purposes of God in relation to mankind, and these convictions then manifested themselves as religious opinions expressed about Church life and practice. The underlying beliefs of the participants arose out of their own journeys of faith in God and in Jesus Christ. Their Christianity was not an ecclesiastical, nor yet a doctrinal, formula, but was understood to be a bond with the divine; it was spiritual. Amongst the Puritans we have found the persistent striving for godliness and obedience driven by their concern for their soul's condition before God. Likewise, among Conformists, I have argued that their writings give evidence of an intense desire for holiness of life, and an insistence that an essential component of true repentance is the good life. Yet, time and again, we find that it was doctrinal motivations, with ecclesial convictions arising out of dogma, which imposed themselves on those who were otherwise united in their desire to follow the Christ of the Scriptures in discipleship and godliness. My argument is that division, when it eventually took place, was founded upon conflicting theological beliefs arising out of divergent interpretations of a rule of faith centred, for both sides, on the Christian Scriptures, opinions often underpinned by differing hermeneutical methods. Theological persuasions, separately arrived at, were held with such inflexible determination that any attempt to impose an alternative infringed upon conceptions held in conscience to such effect that it became impossible for fellow Christians to co-exist in the same religious society. Issues of conscience became so dominant that they eventually overcame other forcefully held stimuli regarding pastoral concerns and the need for harmony and unity in the Church. Fidelity to the individual conscience took precedence over obligations to fellow Christians and the Church as a body. In effect, the power of conscience, fixed in its rigid submission to doctrine, overwhelmed devotion to Christ's purposes for his church: the 'letter' of the Word was substituted for the 'Spirit' of the Word.¹³⁵⁵ My assertions need some clarification.

The reformation in theology and worship that took place in the English Church in the middle years of the sixteenth century was itself a major cause of contention and it has been ever since, not least amongst those who seek to understand it. In our review of recent historiographical analyses, in the first chapter, we were confronted by disagreement about the English Reformation: was it necessary, was it inevitable or was it imposed, how long

¹³⁵⁵ 2 Corinthians 3: 6b

did it take to come to fruition, and was it successful in achieving its goals? This thesis supports the view that the core issues at stake were essentially doctrinal; the effect that these changes in dogma had upon the nature of church worship and buildings was a subsidiary consequence. As the century progressed into Elizabeth's reign, we find the English national Church crystallising its thought, seeking to establish itself on a legal foundation, stringently applied in the cause of uniformity. In an arena in which radicals and recusants were discouraged, even relegated from power, the Church arrived at a consensus in doctrine which was Calvinist in emphasis, existing within a partly Reformed structure that retained many of its pre-Reformation ecclesiastical and liturgical forms.

In the Elizabethan Church controversy was certainly present, fostered by Puritan disciplinarians pressing for further reforms. Evidence for the nature of these disputations we examined in Chapters 6 and 7. They were again, in my submission, essentially doctrinal in nature, yet these disputes did not result, for the most part, in Puritans leaving, or being ejected from the Church. Indeed the evidence is that Cartwright, Travers and Perkins not only remained loyal to the Church of England, they actively opposed separatism. The prevailing consensus on Reformed doctrine, their sense of obligation to the Christian community, and their diligent rejection of schism, bound Puritans in conscience to a single, national Church in England in spite of its perceived failings. These convictions empowered the pragmatic resolution, on both sides, not to enforce principle to the point of partition.

This relatively stable state of affairs presents a marked contrast to the events we explored in Chapters 4 and 5, as they evolved during the seventeenth century. The theological changes experienced, as the decades passed, were multi-faceted, amongst which was the undermining of the Calvinistic consensus associated with the rise of Arminian or anti-Calvinist opinions, this occurring not only among Conformists, but increasingly to be found among Puritans. Polarity became prevalent with, at one extreme, Calvinism evolving, with an anti-Arminian reaction evident at the Synod of Dort and the Westminster Assembly, giving rise to amended understandings of the extent of the atonement, and the introduction of covenant, or federal, theology. At the other, Laudian counter-reformation and ceremonialism, perceived to be supported by the king, and enforced by an episcopate now claiming to be acting *jure divino*, fostered a fear of a return to Catholicism, and giving increasing offence to the consciences of the godly. Also, as theologians remind us, there were further theological pressures adding to the religious tension in the doctrinal 'market place' of the traumatic middle decades of the century. Their contribution highlights the strength of moral theology proliferating amongst the Conformists with its challenge to the

doctrines of grace, and an alleged Antinomianism among some Puritans and radical sectarians, this giving rise to a reactive fear of it to be found both among Conformists and other Puritan thinkers such as Baxter. By 1660, the Church was at boiling point in a doctrinal melting pot, and the bonds of union were disintegrating in the heat.

What was it, then, that finally caused Baxter and his fellow Nonconformists to separate? J.I. Packer makes a fair point when he argues that any

suggestion that ... the root of their non conformity was cussedness, wounded pride, an obstinate refusal to climb down is simply ridiculous. Perjury, and reformation, and the sufficiency of Scripture, and the dispensability of bishops were matters of theological principle as far as they were concerned; and they kept a good conscience in the only way open to them ... by following truth as it appears from Scripture.¹³⁵⁶

‘Theological principle’ was at the heart of the division he claims. The demands made upon the consciences of the Puritans required them to compromise their doctrinal principles: they could not conscientiously deny their past calling and teaching. It was beyond them to give ‘unfeigned assent and consent’ to the 1662 Prayer Book, wholly to abjure the Solemn League and Covenant, to bind themselves unreservedly never, ever to take arms against the king — that would be ‘to assent in advance to any form of royal absolutism’ — nor could they submit to episcopal reordination, effectively a denial of the validity of their previous ministry. Above all, Packer maintains, it was the Puritan view of Scripture, their costly faithfulness to ‘God’s immutable revealed truth’, which left them with no alternative but to withdraw in 1662.¹³⁵⁷ This last assertion, I suggest, is not wholly accurate: it would be more precise to say that what caused them to withdraw was their faithfulness to *their* interpretation of Scripture, which is not the same thing. Is it suggested that all those who conformed were being *unfaithful* to God’s immutable revealed truth? The Puritans were also setting up their own criteria for continued unity, based upon their own readings of Scripture, standards which were unacceptable to the consciences of those remaining loyal to the Church of England. We are not faced here with a clash between a Puritan party which faithfully maintained submission to biblical truth and authority and a Conformist party that did not. As we have seen, the Conformists, including Taylor, Hammond and even Laud, were as insistent as the Puritans on upholding the prime authority of Scripture. ‘The Booke of God, which we honour as His Word, is [the] necessary Revelation of God and His Truth’, declared Laud.¹³⁵⁸ There was a tension, certainly, between the Conformist Anglican and the Puritan in their understanding of the place of Scripture in the divine

¹³⁵⁶ Packer, *Quest*, pp.121-122

¹³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p.122. Packer prefers the label ‘The Great Withdrawal’ to ‘The Great Ejection’

¹³⁵⁸ Laud, *Conference*, p.113. See above, p.115

economy. As Michael Saward observes, ‘the former regarded the Bible as the “supreme” authority’, allowing tradition and reason their subordinate voices, whilst the ‘latter [saw the Bible] as the “sole” authority’,¹³⁵⁹ a dichotomy which, Saward argues, continues within the evangelical movement today. In the seventeenth century, Anglicans suffered, as did Puritans, for their particular reading of the Bible, with thousands ejected from their livings in the 1640s and 1650s, and for Laud it meant that he paid the ultimate price.

What caused the division of the early 1660s was the elevation of diversity to the enforcement of principle, the attempt to impose one rigid interpretation of revealed truth, that of the Conformist Anglicans, on the consciences of those who held to the uncompromising alternative advocated by Nonconformist Puritans. Men such as Owen, for whom the big question was whether the imposition of ‘things and observances’ unscriptural, as he unswervingly interpreted them, should ‘be ... made the indispensable Condition of Communion with any particular Church’.¹³⁶⁰ Certainly, the institutional influences that contributed to the division, which we explored in Chapter 8, were multi-faceted: the strength of remaining Laudianism, the power of lay opinion expressed in Parliament and parish, the reaction to twenty unsettled years in the religious life of society with its intolerance and persecution, these all played a significant role.

But what rendered division unavoidable was the imposition of unacceptable standards on those who refused to compromise. Did the Conformists not recognise the Nonconformists as Christians? If they did, then how could they justify imposing conditions that would exclude them? Did the Puritans not accept the reality of the faith of the conforming Anglicans? How then could they separate: was their rejection of episcopacy, the Prayer Book, their insistence on their views on Church discipline, of greater importance to them than their unity with the body of believers remaining in the Church? Baxter understood clearly what was happening: ‘each party layeth it from themselves, on others’. Both sides, when it fell within their power, were equally at fault in inflicting their own understanding of orthodox doctrine and practice on the consciences of fellow Christians. Baxter again: ‘It is the troubling of the Church with new Articles, and new practices, and leading them from the simplicity that is in Christ, ... which hath been the great plague and divider of the Churches in all Ages’.¹³⁶¹

In the view of the ‘Laudians’, this was precisely what the Puritans were doing: introducing into the Church innovations — practices previously unknown in the 1600-year

¹³⁵⁹ Saward, ‘At root’, p.81

¹³⁶⁰ Owen, *Discourse*, p.172

¹³⁶¹ Baxter, *Catholic Theologie*, ‘The Preface’, (1st para), and *Ibid.*, p.59

history of the Church — without the warrant of Scripture, tradition or reason, and without legal sanction. In so doing, they were in defiance of the biblical requirement to obey those holding divinely appointed authority in the Church. The Puritan retort was that it was Laud, those who supported him, and those who followed in his wake, who were introducing idolatrous ceremonial innovations, propagating their heretical Arminian doctrine, all without the endorsement of Scripture. Submission cannot be required, they maintained, to any authority which acts un-biblically: authority rests with the Word of God, not with the office of bishop. Devout men, on both sides of the divide, were certain that they were right, insisting that it was their arguments that had scriptural endorsement, and that their view must prevail.

As we bring our thoughts to a conclusion, it is my thesis, in the context of the dissensions present in the seventeenth-century English Church, that it was uncompromisingly maintained ecclesiastical and theological dogma that caused the divisions of the 1660s, this in spite of both sides giving evidence of a common faith and experience of God in their public and private spiritual lives. Christian unity based on the essential nature of their Christianity, which was their relationship with God in Christ, was sabotaged by a prerequisite to submit, as a condition of acceptance, to a prescribed doctrinal and ecclesial formula, and it was this requirement which drove Baxter, and many like him, from the national Church; that was the breaking point. He, and those like him, were not Nonconformists by choice. As Keeble observes, whilst Baxter could

readily admit as lawful such practices as kneeling to receive the sacrament, he could not accept as lawful the imposition of such indifferent matters upon those who conscientiously judged them inadmissible; still less could acceptance of them be elevated to a condition of communion.¹³⁶²

Any demand to yield, as a condition of unity, to regulations and dogma outside the clear, universally recognised, call of Scripture, the Creeds and their consciences, was a requirement to commit a form of perjury, a step too far, one which the Nonconformists' consciences would not permit them to take.

My arguments draw our thinking inevitably to the significance of confessions, and their associated expressions of theological belief, both private and corporate. Religion is often considered a matter of personal conviction; public scrutiny and the enforcement of standards are not always welcome. It is rarely considered in one's best interests to make an open admission of one's beliefs, when anything by way of heterodox religious belief might be judged unacceptable. Such misgivings are magnified when religious or state institutions

¹³⁶² Keeble, 'Baxter'

bring pressure to bear upon those expressing apparent deviations from defined ‘orthodox’ standards. These standards often manifest themselves in the form of confessions and statements of perceived orthodox dogma set as a prescribed condition of acceptance. Such declarations have proliferated since the Reformation.

According to Clifford, early Reformed confessions of Christianity demonstrate general agreement both in their doctrinal content and simplicity, but with the passage of time, and with the arrival of unconventional opinions, the ‘orthodox’ saw a need to safeguard their faith against misrepresentation. As a result, cautious qualifications and efforts to avoid ambiguity were introduced in an endeavour to eradicate all possibility of error. The Canons of Dort and the Westminster Confession of Faith are seen by Clifford as examples of attempts to compensate for the deficiencies of earlier confessions. ‘Thus emerged the “protestant magisterium”, with the consequence that it was no longer possible for “laymen” to satisfy their enquiry by a mere appeal to the plain text of Scripture’.¹³⁶³ The perspicuity of Scripture became open to question and this effectively remains the case. Any desire by the individual to conform, to adhere to an established standard of faith is, and has been, complicated by the plethora of existing doctrinal prescriptions, the written expressions of faith that seek to define what constitutes ‘orthodox’ Christian belief. It is the examination of the effect of these formulae that reveals a major, if not *the* major, cause of religious division.

The power and influence of religious confession is a multi-faceted study in itself. Space forbids a detailed examination of the concept of ‘Confessionalization’, which is a notion developed in the 1980s by Heinz Schilling and Wolfgang Reinhard, which examines the way by which state authorities in mainland Europe, both Protestant and Catholic, used diverse forms of confessions and catechisms to empower their authority. In an alliance — it is argued — between state and church, subjects were educated with catechisms and exposed to the requirement to take confessional oaths as a means to establish a national identity, and as an instrument for social disciplining. The thesis has not been without its critics, and in the context of this study its contribution is restricted given its failure to find application to the English Reformation.¹³⁶⁴ Nevertheless, insofar as doctrinal confessionalization can be shown to have caused the fracturing of Europe, it has parallels with my thesis in that it was the imposition of prescriptive doctrinal standards that became a major cause of splintering in the Church, and in the formation of diverse Christian loyalties in England. The concept adds strength to my arguments when we find Hunt

¹³⁶³ Clifford, *Atonement*, p.142

¹³⁶⁴ Walsham has a helpful chapter on ‘Confessionalisation’ in *Charitable Hatred*, pp.302-305

maintaining that the currently dominant theory of confessionalisation ‘holds that a period of creative anarchy in the early Reformation gave way, in the later sixteenth century, to a hardening of confessional boundaries and, ultimately, a kind of trench warfare as opposing religious groups dug themselves in behind polemical lines’.¹³⁶⁵

The importance of doctrine it is not my intention to question; it is of huge significance, especially Christian theology as delineated in the ecumenical creeds, dogmas which the major sections of the universal Church acknowledge as defining a standard for Christian belief. But when, if ever, should dogma be considered the essential criteria for acceptance? This is the question this thesis raises; let us take a final look at the implications.

Observations

In the Church we often confuse unity with agreement.

Justin Welby (as Bishop of Durham)¹³⁶⁶

Carter Lindberg, in an article on the history, historiography and interpretations of European Reformations, has observed that ‘a visit to the past provides ... a vantage point from which to comprehend the present’.¹³⁶⁷ To observe the present in the light of the past, he claims, can have distinct advantages. We are too close to the characteristics of the present to observe them in focus. To what extent then can we take a step back in order to comprehend the Church of the present by observing conditions in the Church of the past?

It has been my task to demonstrate that in the early modern English Church, although intended to clarify and provide criteria for unity, required standards of observance and belief, insofar as they represent non-negotiable mandatory expressions of dogma, obscure the nature of essential faith, they impinge irretrievably upon the Christian conscience, and thereby give rise to disunity.¹³⁶⁸ Doctrine was granted the power to divide those who were otherwise united in their membership of the same Christian family, the Church universal. Seeing this, Baxter was wary of any attempt to impose on the Christian conscience any form of prescribed belief, outside the historic Christian creeds. If there is a need for definition at all then it is the ecumenical creeds which, at best, can delineate the essence of the Christian faith, and that is as much as can be asked of the individual. He declared,

¹³⁶⁵ Hunt, *Hearing*, pp.390-391

¹³⁶⁶ Justin Welby, Pentecost Semon at Durham Cathedral, May 27, 2012.

¹³⁶⁷ Lindberg, *Reformations*, p.2

¹³⁶⁸ Note the number and variety of declarations of faith generated since the Reformation, Appendix III, p.327

Two things have set fire on the Church, and been the plagues of it [t]his thousand years ... First, enlarging our Creed, and making more fundamentals [t]han God hath done. Secondly, delivering our Creeds, and Confessions in our own humane phrase,¹³⁶⁹

and, 'O what mischief hath the Church of Christ suffered by the enlarging of her Creed!'¹³⁷⁰

In our day Lesslie Newbigin agrees with Baxter when maintaining that

the true character of [the] union of believers with one another is disastrously distorted when it is conceived of essentially in terms of doctrinal agreement. The effect of such distortion is to break up the Christian fellowship into rival parties each based on some one-sided doctrinal formulation, and eventually into completely separate bodies.¹³⁷¹

The validity of Baxter's and Newbigin's arguments are, I suggest, amply demonstrated by the evidence; it is hard to deny the strength of these verdicts, and I consider them as applicable today as they were in the seventeenth century. Prescriptive doctrinal declarations, confessions, articles of religion, statements of faith, standards of conformity, and, indeed, any dogmatic insistence on a particular understanding of what must constitute required belief have, by their very nature, confused the issues and been divisive of Christians. These diverse declarations — each of which is invariably subjected to a variety of interpretations — are no doubt created with the best of intentions: they are produced as a response to specific situations. As the evangelical theologian Toon reminds us, the abundance of post-Reformation confessions, whilst they were — and are — the product of sincere and able authors, they are nonetheless the work of

men of a particular persuasion, with very definite views, and views often hardened by controversy. In their sincere attempts to formulate doctrine these workers are wearing, as it were, tinted spectacles — tinted by their own strongly held presuppositions. Thus, they tended to see in Scripture only that which their spectacles allowed them to see.¹³⁷²

In a review of the role of tradition in the formulation of evangelical theology, McGrath endorses Toon's observations:

We all read Scripture through spectacles that shape, to a greater or lesser extent, what we find as we read. ... Some are ... reluctant to concede this point and suggest that they are able to read and interpret the Bible objectively. They feel liberated from the awkward intrusion of the subtle influences of culture, personal history, notions of truth, and the lengthening shadows of great individuals who have shaped our evangelical culture. But this is not the case. ... many British evangelicals read Scripture with spectacles that have been subtly configured, like a distorting mirror, with the moral assumptions of middle-class England of the post-war period, quite unaware that they are doing so.¹³⁷³

¹³⁶⁹ Baxter, *Rest*, pt.ii, Preface, 'To the Reader' unpaginated

¹³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p.523.

¹³⁷¹ Newbigin, *Household*, pp.53-54

¹³⁷² Toon, *Development*, p.xi

¹³⁷³ McGrath, 'Engaging Tradition', p.147

This I consider a forceful and accurate assessment. Whilst Christians might endorse the same rule of faith, they remain, under the influence of their singularly pre-conceived assumptions, prone to arrive at different conclusions. This is a potential danger for us all, and it must be a prime explanation for the differences between Conformists and Puritans when both groups insisted on submission to Scripture as the rule of faith.

The difficulties for Evangelicals today are exacerbated by the strength of the emphasis they place upon definitions of orthodox biblical doctrine as being the touchstone for acceptability. Francis Schaeffer (1912-1984), whilst emphasising that the mark of the Christian is his/her love for fellow believers, went so far as to insist that doctrine has to be the critical test of the legitimacy of an individual's Christianity:

The church is to judge whether a man is a Christian on the basis of his doctrine, the propositional content of his faith, and then his credible profession of faith. When a man comes before a local church that is doing its job, he will be quizzed on the content of what he believes.¹³⁷⁴

This proposition might prove acceptable as a standard of acceptance into a particular church tradition or denomination, but it is problematic as a basis for distinguishing the validity of a Christian's standing, unless there is first established a clear standard of precisely which doctrines essentially define what is to be believed. As Rob Warner has observed, amongst Evangelicals this has yet to be achieved:

Since evangelicals [in the late twentieth century] were unable to codify a single confession of faith that secured universal pan-evangelical assent, this exposes a greater degree of diversity within the evangelical tradition ... than some evangelicals would admit or tolerate. Whilst the bases of faith proclaim an absolute confidence in revealed truth, divergence between the bases serves to relativise their formulations, demonstrating substantial diversity and dispute between different groupings who claim with equal confidence to be authentic exponents of evangelical convictions. When diverse evangelical sectors were equally certain about differing conclusions and emphases, dogmatic exclusivism grew less plausible with every new basis of faith.¹³⁷⁵

Warner goes on to express his concerns even more succinctly: 'pan-evangelicalism has exhibited a sustained and distinctive predilection for new-minted bases'.¹³⁷⁶ Baxter would be appalled.

The seventeenth century, as we have seen, evolved into a period of doctrinal pluralism, which remains with us in the twenty-first century. In such a context, what is — and who decides what is — definitive revealed truth, is a vital question. Effectively, I suggest,

¹³⁷⁴ Schaeffer, *Mark*, p.16

¹³⁷⁵ Warner, *Reinventing Evangelicalism*, p.172

¹³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p.246

amongst those who accept that the standard for Christian belief and practice is to be found in the Bible — and historically this means the great majority — there can remain only one definitive version of revealed truth: Scripture itself. Set against that standard, each statement of faith is no more than one interpretation, that of the author(s), and, given their diversity, they are all rendered unreliable. It is a weakness in their case which those who rely on these definitions will rarely acknowledge, but Kevin J. Vanhoozer is right when he claims that what we have is a hermeneutical crisis, a ‘legitimation crisis, a crisis over the principles by which one recognises any particular interpretation as more valid than another: whose reading — whose voice — counts, and why?’¹³⁷⁷

Adjudication, it might be claimed, lies with ‘the Church’, since it was the Church that settled upon the canon of Scripture in the first place. If that be the case, then what do we mean by ‘the Church’, and who within the Church exercises that authority: ecumenical councils, the Pope, the bishops, the theological scholar, the presbytery, gathered congregations of the faithful, the local exegete, or the well informed ‘Spirit-led’ individual? These questions — whilst not the subject of this thesis — immediately arise with prominence if its conclusions are accepted.

Different Christian traditions have their own underlying principles monitoring their interpretation. Pelikan argues that, from the Roman Catholic perspective, ‘any “reformation” of established orthodox doctrine can only mean “reaffirmation.”’ Orthodoxy lies with the early Church, those closest to the Apostles, hence the requirement to ‘stick closely to traditional doctrinal formulas.’¹³⁷⁸ But, what happens when we find the early Church Fathers in disagreement, not to mention our own differing understandings of the patristic testimony? After all, as Wright maintains, such an assertion

makes a rather obvious logical mistake analogous to that of a soldier who, receiving orders through the mail, concludes that the postman is his commanding officer. Those who transmit, collect and distribute the message [those within the immediate post-apostolic Church] are not in the same league as those who write it in the first place.¹³⁷⁹

Truth cannot be established purely on a foundation of its post-apostolic antiquity.

The methodology maintained by those in the Protestant tradition has its own particular problems given its willingness to expose Scripture to any reading, whether by corporate bodies or individual Christians. Newman’s Catholic critique of Protestantism’s vagaries was scathing:

¹³⁷⁷ Vanhoozer, ‘Voice’, p.66

¹³⁷⁸ Pelikan, *Christian Tradition*, IV, p.5

¹³⁷⁹ Wright, *Scripture*, p.46

The Bible is not so written as to force its meaning on the reader: no two Protestant sects can agree together whose interpretation of the Bible is to be received; and under such circumstances each naturally prefers his own; his own 'interpretation,' his own 'doctrine,' his own 'tongue,' his own 'revelation'. ... the notion ... of the Bible without note or comment being the sole authoritative judge in controversies of faith, is a self-destructive principle, ... dispute is altogether hopeless and useless, and even absurd.¹³⁸⁰

The argument is forceful, but, on the other hand, it is by no means clear to non-Catholics why the interpretations of the Newman 'sect' should be any more valid. A far more irenic view comes, perhaps surprisingly, from quite the opposite end of the spectrum, from the pen of E.J. Poole-Connor, who summarised the situation perfectly when he observed that

the utmost that anyone can say is that his creed is a statement of scriptural truth as he sees it and therefore binding on his conscience. To attempt to make it binding on that of his brethren, and to exclude them from communion because their interpretation of the 'one faith' is different from his, is to claim for an exegesis of Scripture the infallibility of Scripture itself.¹³⁸¹

In that view, each Christian is answerable to his or her own conscience and, ultimately, directly to the God they seek to follow and obey.

So, the argument has to be allowed that, over against all assertive interpretations, Scripture — which is the only revelation of God's purposes that can in any sense be said to be accepted by the universal Church — must be allowed to speak for itself, it has to be its own authority, and no individual, nor any corpus, can command the last word over it. As Baxter argued, none can 'pretend to be the Universal Infallible Judge of controversies'. We do not even have the benefit of a General Council, nor is there ever likely to be one, he argued. 'God forbid we should defer our Peace till then'. How then would Baxter resolve the dilemma?

I will make a motion that none can gainsay that hath the face of a Christian. Let us first agree in all those points that Papists and Protestants, Calvinists and Lutherans, Arminians and Anabaptists, and Seperatists, and all parties that deserve to be called Christians, are agreed in! What say you, is not this a reasonable motion! O happy you, and happy the places where you live, if you would but stand to it!¹³⁸²

That is an amazingly radical proposition for the seventeenth century, one which we are scarcely able meaningfully to address even in the twenty-first.

Such idealism was not achievable in the seventeenth century English Church. As Chadwick puts it, the two extremes could have been held together only by a comprehensive

¹³⁸⁰ Newman, *Via Media*, p.80

¹³⁸¹ E.J. Poole-Connor, *Evangelical Unity*, (London, 1941), p.192, cited by David Coffey, *All One in Christ Jesus*, (Milton Keynes, 2009), p.45. Poole-Connor was the founder of the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches.

¹³⁸² Baxter, *Catholic Unity*, pp.92-94

theology and tolerance of practice which was not possible in that age.¹³⁸³ My argument has been that it was attempts to impose doctrinal and ecclesiastical structures on the consciences of Christians which were the major cause of religious division, when it occurred, in the early modern Church. Those demands were set against an intransigent unwillingness, by the Nonconformists, to give ground to contrary Conformist principles. In the sixteenth century, in the face of similar pressures, but with the benefit of relative accord in doctrine, fidelity to the Church was maintained on both sides in the belief that faithful Christians needed continuing pastoral care and instruction, and, in the pursuit of this essential task, the Church must remain united. In the next century, these convictions were to prove insufficient. Major changes to theological perceptions, and the pressures imposed by civil conflict played a significant role, but essentially, the great divide of 1662 was caused by the strict requirement, encapsulated in the Act of Uniformity, to adhere to a specific formula for Christian belief and practice. That was a stipulation that proved impossible for many genuine Christian believers to accept, and the Church was torn apart. Baxter was right: 'Every new Article that was added to the Creed was a new engine to stretch the brains of believers, and in the issue to rend out the bowels of the Church'.¹³⁸⁴

The questions and arguments raised in this thesis are of specific concern to us when we notice that many of the divisive issues that were so vital to the divines of the seventeenth century — the principles which were perceived by the Puritans to be matters of 'immutable revealed truth' — are no longer considered crucial by many in the modern Church, including those upholding the evangelical tradition. Already, in the eighteenth century, John Wesley was declaring, 'I believe there is no Liturgy in the world, ... which breaths a more solid, scriptural, rational Piety, than the Common Prayer of the Church of England'.¹³⁸⁵ By the nineteenth century, Anglican Evangelicals held the 1662 Prayer Book to be the bastion of orthodoxy. Charles Simeon (1759-1836) is reported as affirming, 'the Bible first, the Prayer Book next, and all other books ... in subordination to both'.¹³⁸⁶ As a bulwark against liberal theology, heresy or Romanising tendencies within the Church, the *Book of Common Prayer* and the 'Thirty-Nine Articles' were seen as ideally suited to uphold Reformation principles and facilitate the avoidance of extremes.¹³⁸⁷ Likewise today, Anglican Evangelicals, maintaining a doctrinal position in many respects aligned with their

¹³⁸³ Chadwick, 'Introduction', p.7

¹³⁸⁴ Baxter, *Rest*, p.523

¹³⁸⁵ Wesley, *Sunday Service*, Preface, A2r

¹³⁸⁶ Smyth, *Simeon*, p.291 and Chadwick, *Victorian Church*, I, p.442

¹³⁸⁷ Carter, *Anglican Evangelicals*, p.14

Puritan forebears, are no longer averse to the use of surplices, rings in marriage, the sign of the cross in baptism, and lawful submission to episcopal authority.

It is pertinent to ask then whether the major issues that are in danger of dividing the Church in our own day will always retain their powerful significance, including those that threaten unity amongst Evangelicals. Regrettably tensions in this tradition proliferate, between those variously upholding a conservative, 'open', charismatic, or liberal evangelical emphasis, conflicting responses to the 'emerging church' movement, the renewed debate between Calvinists and Arminians, contested theories about creation and evolution, the atonement, biblical 'inerrancy', the theology of justification and N.T. Wright's advocacy of the 'New Perspectives on Paul', divergent views concerning Scripture and sexuality, and the huge debate about the role of women in ministry and oversight. Will these and other like concerns, which have a predisposition to divide in our day, have the same intense import for Christians in four-hundred years' time?

To conclude, the unavoidable corollary from all these arguments supports the contention that elite doctrinaire benchmarks on dogma are not an option open to any. Dogmatic assertions on doctrine, expressed as prescriptive 'statements of faith' are as fallible as those who produce them, and attempts to rely upon them as a sound basis for unity, communion, or association is hugely problematic. This would even include Articles of Religion, Reformed confessions of the sixteenth century such as the Heidelberg Catechism and the Augsburg Confession, imposed Anglican prayer books or Puritan directories, the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the requirements of the 1662 Act of Uniformity. The same argument applies to present day bases of faith. Confessions and statements of belief have proliferated since the Reformation until today and they remain far from bringing clarity and unity.¹³⁸⁸

One of the prime causes, if not *the* cause, of divisions in the Church is the fixation of certain of its members with correct order, acceptable practice, and above all on 'orthodox' doctrinal formulae as the essential bases for unity and association in mission, this at the expense of a unity founded on our union in Christ. If this assertion, which represents my prime conclusion, is accepted, then we are presented with a major problem, given the inability of Christians to agree upon the necessary prerequisites. But, the late sixteenth century Church tells us it need not be the case, for then, as we have seen, men holding opposing persuasions did not normally separate. Rigidly upheld standards of dogma and conscience were successfully subverted by the powerful conviction that the greater need

¹³⁸⁸ See Appendix III, pp.327-330

was for the unity of the Church, and the spiritual needs of its members. In the seventeenth century, the strength of conscientious conviction, centred on dogma, prevailed, and we in the twenty-first century have inherited the consequences; indeed, we are in danger of repeating them.

Whether or not a divided Church was, in 1662 — and is for us today — a disaster is a matter of judgement. Some might argue that the divide was inevitable. How can those who differ on doctrine remain united? ‘Can two walk together, except they be agreed?’¹³⁸⁹ Others might suggest that, functionally, the Church worldwide has benefited from a break from the constraints of a single monolithic Church institution. It might also be argued that perhaps the essential unity of Christian believers is not compromised by its multiple denominational and even its doctrinal distinctions anyway. After all, as Hooker prophetically observed, ‘there are divers kinds of equall goodnesse’.¹³⁹⁰

But, ‘The Church’ is not an institution. The catholic — that is, the universal — Church is a family, it is a body comprised of believing men and women, all of whom seek to be faithful disciples of Jesus Christ. That family is divided, not just into denominations, but also in its on-going relationships, and it is in danger of fragmenting further. It is not the stated will of our founder that Christian believers should ever be divided. After all, the evidence for the reality of our Christian experience, Christ tells us, is in our unity, for ‘by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another’.¹³⁹¹

Epilogue

The kingdom of God consisteth in simplicity of faith, not in wordy contention.

Ambrose of Milan (339-397)¹³⁹²

All Christians are one Body in Christ — we cannot create this, but only recognize it ... and then fearlessly practice it, disregarding our differences in doctrine, forms and interpretations of the Bible. We must receive one another on the ground of a mutual fellowship with God in living union with Christ in the Spirit.

Kokichi Kurosaki (1886-1970)¹³⁹³

¹³⁸⁹ Amos 3: 3

¹³⁹⁰ Hooker, *Works*, I, p.333

¹³⁹¹ John 13: 35

¹³⁹² Ambrose, *Exposition*, p.208

¹³⁹³ Kurosaki, *One Body*, p.36n

In the following appendices, in Appendix I, relevant statutory documents are provided, as a whole or in part, for ease of reference. In Appendix II Baxter's list of doctrinal controversies is given as an example of the contentious issues that, in his view, were the principal causes of dissention. Appendix III is the author's compilation of Confessions of faith since 1517, most of them Protestant. The list is offered as evidence of the diversity in Christian belief that materialised at and since the Reformation.

Appendix I

[Text spelling modernised]

(a) The 1559 Act of Uniformity¹³²⁴

Where at the death of our late sovereign lord King Edward VI there remained one uniform order of common service and prayer, and of the administration of sacraments, rites, and ceremonies in the Church of England, which was set forth in one book, intituled: The Book of Common Prayer, and Administration of Sacraments, and other rites and ceremonies in the Church of England; authorized by Act of Parliament holden in the fifth and sixth years of our said late sovereign lord King Edward VI, intituled: An Act for the uniformity of common prayer, and administration of the sacraments; the which was repealed and taken away by Act of Parliament in the first year of the reign of our late sovereign lady Queen Mary, to the great decay of the due honour of God, and discomfort to the professors of the truth of Christ's religion:

Be it therefore enacted by the authority of this present Parliament, that the said statute of repeal, and everything therein contained, only concerning the said book, and the service, administration of sacraments, rites, and ceremonies contained or appointed in or by the said book, shall be void and of none effect, from and after the feast of the Nativity of St. John Baptist next coming; and that the said book, with the order of service, and of the administration of sacraments, rites, and ceremonies, with the alterations and additions therein added and appointed by this statute, shall stand and be, from and after the said feast of the Nativity of St. John Baptist, in full force and effect, according to the tenor and effect of this statute; anything in the aforesaid statute of repeal to the contrary notwithstanding.

And further be it enacted by the queen's highness, with the assent of the Lords and Commons in this present Parliament assembled, and by authority of the same, that all and singular ministers in any cathedral or parish church, or other place within this realm of England, Wales, and the marches of the same, or other the queen's dominions, shall from and after the feast of the Nativity of St. John Baptist next coming be bounden to say and use the Matins, Evensong, celebration of the Lord's Supper and administration of each of the sacraments, and all their common and open prayer, in such order and form as is mentioned in the said book, so authorized by Parliament in the said fifth and sixth years of the reign of King Edward VI, with one alteration or addition of certain lessons to be used

¹³²⁴ 'Elizabeth's Act of Uniformity (1559), 1 Elizabeth, Cap. 2' in Henry Gee and William John Hardy, (eds), Documents Illustrative of English Church History (New York: Macmillan, 1896), pp. 458-67, accessed at, [www. http://history.hanover.edu/texts/engref/er80](http://history.hanover.edu/texts/engref/er80), October 11, 2012

on every Sunday in the year, and the form of the Litany altered and corrected, and two sentences only added in the delivery of the sacrament to the communicants, and none other or otherwise.

And that if any manner of parson, vicar, or other whatsoever minister, that ought or should sing or say common prayer mentioned in the said book, or minister the sacraments, from and after the feast of the nativity of St. John Baptist next coming, refuse to use the said common prayers, or to minister the sacraments in such cathedral or parish church, or other places as he should use to minister the same, in such order and form as they be mentioned and set forth in the said book, or shall wilfully or obstinately standing in the same, use any other rite, ceremony, order, form, or manner of celebrating of the Lord's Supper, openly or privily, or Matins, Evensong, administration of the sacraments, or other open prayers, than is mentioned and set forth in the said book (open prayer in and throughout this Act, is meant that prayer which is for other to come unto, or hear, either in common churches or private chapels or oratories, commonly called the service of the Church), or shall preach, declare, or speak anything in the derogation or depraving of the said book, or anything therein contained, or of any part thereof, and shall be thereof lawfully convicted, according to the laws of this realm, by verdict of twelve men, or by his own confession, or by the notorious evidence of the fact, shall lose and forfeit to the queen's highness, her heirs and successors, for his first offence, the profit of all his spiritual benefices or promotions coming or arising in one whole year next after his conviction; and also that the person so convicted shall for the same offence suffer imprisonment by the space of six months, without bail or mainprize.

And if any such person once convicted of any offence concerning the premises, shall after his first conviction eftsoons offend, and be thereof, in form aforesaid, lawfully convicted, that then the same person shall for his second offence suffer imprisonment by the space of one whole year, and also shall therefore be deprived, ipso facto, of all his spiritual promotions; and that it shall be lawful to all patrons or donors of all and singular the same spiritual promotions, or of any of them, to present or collate to the same, as though the person and persons so offending were dead.

And that if any such person or persons, after he shall be twice convicted in form aforesaid, shall offend against any of the premises the third time, and shall be thereof, in form aforesaid, lawfully convicted, that then the person so offending and convicted the third time, shall be deprived, ipso facto, of all his spiritual promotions, and also shall suffer imprisonment during his life.

And if the person that shall offend, and be convicted in form aforesaid, concerning any of the premises, shall not be beneficed, nor have any spiritual promotion, that then the same person so offending and convicted shall for the first offence suffer imprisonment during one whole year next after his said conviction, without bail or mainprize. And if any such person, not having any spiritual promotion, after his first conviction shall eftsoons offend in anything concerning the premises, and shall be, in form aforesaid, thereof lawfully convicted, that then the same person shall for his second offence suffer imprisonment during his life.

And it is ordained and enacted by the authority aforesaid, that if any person or persons whatsoever, after the said feast of the Nativity of St. John Baptist next coming, shall in any interludes, plays, songs, rhymes, or by other open words, declare or speak anything in the derogation, depraving, or despising of the same book, or of anything therein contained, or

any part thereof, or shall, by open fact, deed, or by open threatenings, compel or cause, or otherwise procure or maintain, any parson, vicar, or other minister in any cathedral or parish church, or in chapel, or in any other place, to sing or say any common or open prayer, or to minister any sacrament otherwise, or in any other manner and form, than is mentioned in the said book; or that by any of the said means shall unlawfully interrupt or let any parson, vicar, or other minister in any cathedral or parish church, chapel, or any other place, to sing or say common and open prayer, or to minister the sacraments or any of them, in such manner and form as is mentioned in the said book; that then every such person, being thereof lawfully convicted in form abovesaid, shall forfeit to the queen our sovereign lady, her heirs and successors, for the first offence a hundred marks.

And if any person or persons, being once convicted of any such offence, eftsoons offend against any of the last recited offences, and shall, in form aforesaid, be thereof lawfully convicted, that then the same person so offending and convicted shall, for the second offence, forfeit to the queen our sovereign lady, her heirs and successors, four hundred marks.

And if any person, after he, in form aforesaid, shall have been twice convicted of any offence concerning any of the last recited offences, shall offend the third time, and be thereof, in form abovesaid, lawfully convicted, that then every person so offending and convicted shall for his third offence forfeit to our sovereign lady the queen all his goods and chattels, and shall suffer imprisonment during his life.

And if any person or persons, that for his first offence concerning the premises shall be convicted, in form aforesaid, do not pay the sum to be paid by virtue of his conviction, in such manner and form as the same ought to be paid, within six weeks next after his conviction; that then every person so convicted, and so not paying the same, shall for the same first offence, instead of the said sum, suffer imprisonment by the space of six months, without bail or mainprize. And if any person or persons, that for his second offence concerning the premises shall be convicted in form aforesaid, do not pay the said sum to be paid by virtue of his conviction and this statute, in such manner and form as the same ought to be paid, within six weeks next after his said second conviction; that then every person so convicted, and not so paying the same, shall, for the same second offence, in the stead of the said sum, suffer imprisonment during twelve months, without bail or mainprize.

And that from and after the said feast of the Nativity of St. John Baptist next coming, all and every person and persons inhabiting within this realm, or any other the queen's majesty's dominions, shall diligently and faithfully, having no lawful or reasonable excuse to be absent, endeavour themselves to resort to their parish church or chapel accustomed, or upon reasonable let thereof, to some usual place where common prayer and such service of God shall be used in such time of let, upon every Sunday and other days ordained and used to be kept as holy days, and then and there to abide orderly and soberly during the time of the common prayer, preachings, or other service of God there to be used and ministered; upon pain of punishment by the censures of the Church, and also upon pain that every person so offending shall forfeit for every such offence twelve pence, to be levied by the churchwardens of the parish where such offence shall be done, to the use of the poor of the same parish, of the goods, lands, and tenements of such offender, by way of distress.

And for due execution hereof, the queen's most excellent majesty, the Lords temporal (sic), and all the Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, do in God's name earnestly

require and charge all the archbishops, bishops, and other ordinaries, that they shall endeavour themselves to the uttermost of their knowledges, that the due and true execution hereof may be had throughout their dioceses and charges, as they will answer before God, for such evils and plagues wherewith Almighty God may justly punish His people for neglecting this good and wholesome law.

And for their authority in this behalf, be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that all and singular the same archbishops, bishops, and all other their officers exercising ecclesiastical jurisdiction, as well in place exempt as not exempt, within their dioceses, shall have full power and authority by this Act to reform, correct, and punish by censures of the Church, all and singular persons which shall offend within any their jurisdictions or dioceses, after the said feast of the Nativity of St. John Baptist next coming, against this Act and statute; any other law, statute, privilege, liberty, or provision heretofore made, had, or suffered to the contrary notwithstanding.

And it is ordained and enacted by the authority aforesaid, that all and every justices of oyer and terminer, or justices of assize, shall have full power and authority in every of their open and general sessions, to inquire, hear, and determine all and all manner of offences that shall be committed or done contrary to any article contained in this present Act, within the limits of the commission to them directed, and to make process for the execution of the same, as they may do against any person being indicted before them of trespass, or lawfully convicted thereof.

Provided always, and be it enacted by the authority aforesaid, that all and every archbishop and bishop shall or may, at all time and times, at his liberty and pleasure, join and associate himself, by virtue of this Act, to the said justices of oyer and terminer, or to the said justices of assize, at every of the said open and general sessions to be holden in any place within his diocese, for and to the inquiry, hearing, and determining of the offences aforesaid.

Provided also, and be it enacted by the authority aforesaid, that the books concerning the said services shall, at the cost and charges of the parishioners of every parish and cathedral church, be attained and gotten before the said feast of the Nativity of St. John Baptist next following; and that all such parishes and cathedral churches, or other places where the said books shall be attained and gotten before the said feast of the Nativity of St. John Baptist, shall, within three weeks next after the said books so attained and gotten, use the said service, and put the same in use according to this Act.

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that no person or persons shall be at any time hereafter impeached or otherwise molested of or for any the offences above mentioned, hereafter to be committed or done contrary to this Act, unless he or they so offending be thereof indicted at the next general sessions to be holden before any such justices of oyer and terminer or justices of assize, next after any offence committed or done contrary to the tenor of this Act.

Provided always, and be it ordained and enacted by the authority aforesaid, that all and singular lords of the Parliament, for the third offence above mentioned, shall be tried by their peers.

Provided also, and be it ordained and enacted by the authority aforesaid, that the mayor of London, and all other mayors, bailiffs, and other head officers of all and singular cities,

boroughs, and towns corporate within this realm, Wales, and the marches of the same, to the which justices of assize do not commonly repair, shall have full power and authority by virtue of this Act to inquire, hear, and determine the offences abovesaid, and every of them, yearly within fifteen days after the feasts of Easter and St. Michael the Archangel, in like manner and form as justices of assize and oyer and terminer may do.

Provided always, and be it ordained and enacted by the authority aforesaid, that all and singular archbishops and bishops, and every their chancellors, commissaries, archdeacons, and other ordinaries, having any peculiar ecclesiastical jurisdiction. shall have full power and authority by virtue of this Act, as well to inquire in their visitation, synods, and elsewhere within their jurisdiction at any other time and place, to take occasions (sic) and informations of all and every the things above mentioned, done, committed, or perpetrated within the limits of their jurisdictions and authority, and to punish the same by admonition, excommunication, sequestration, or deprivation, and other censures and processes, in like form as heretofore has been used in like cases by the queen's ecclesiastical laws.

Provided always, and be it enacted, that whatsoever person offending in the premises shall, for the offence, first receive punishment of the ordinary, having a testimonial thereof under the said ordinary's seal, shall not for the same offence eftsoons be convicted before the justices: and likewise receiving, for the said offence, first punishment by the justices, he shall not for the same offence eftsoons receive punishment of the ordinary; anything contained in this Act to the contrary notwithstanding.

Provided always, and be it enacted, that such ornaments of the church, and of the ministers thereof, shall be retained and be in use, as was in the Church of England, by authority of Parliament, in the second year of the reign of King Edward VI, until other order shall be therein taken by the authority of the queen's majesty, with the advice of her commissioners appointed and authorized, under the great seal of England, for causes ecclesiastical, or of the metropolitan of this realm.

And also, that if there shall happen any contempt or irreverence to be used in the ceremonies or rites of the Church, by the misusing of the orders appointed in this book, the queen's majesty may, by the like advice of the said commissioners or metropolitan, ordain and publish such further ceremonies or rites, as may be most for the advancement of God's glory, the edifying of His Church, and the due reverence of Christ's holy mysteries and sacraments.

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that all laws, statutes, and ordinances, wherein or whereby any other service, administration of sacraments or common prayer, is limited, established, or set forth to be used within this realm, or any other the queen's dominions or countries, shall from henceforth be utterly void and of none effect.

**(b) Articles Touching Preachers and other
Orders for the Church A.D. 1583**

[Article 6]¹³²⁵

[Highlights and footnotes are the author's.]

6. That none be permitted to preach, read, catechise, minister the sacraments, or to execute any other ecclesiastical function, by what authority soever he be admitted thereunto, unless he consent and subscribe to these Articles following, before the ordinary of the diocese wherein he preacheth, readeth, catechiseth, or ministereth the sacraments, viz.:

(1) That her majesty, under God, hath, and ought to have, the sovereignty and rule over all manner of persons born within her realms, dominions, and countries, of what estate, either ecclesiastical or temporal, soever they be; and that no foreign power, prelate, state, or potentate hath, or ought to have, any jurisdiction, power, superiority, pre-eminence, or authority, ecclesiastical or spiritual, within her majesty's said realms, dominions, and countries.

(2) That the Book of Common Prayer, and of ordering bishops, priests, and deacons, containeth nothing in it contrary to the word of God, and that the same may lawfully be used, and that he himself will use the form of the said book prescribed in public prayer and administration of the sacraments, and none other.

(3) That he alloweth the book of Articles of religion, agreed upon by the archbishops and bishops of both provinces, and the whole clergy in the Convocation holden at London in the year of our Lord God 1562, and set forth by her majesty's authority, and that he believeth all the Articles therein contained to be agreeable to the word of God.

¹³²⁵ Articles Touching Preachers and Other Orders for the Church (1583)' in Henry Gee and W.H. Hardy (eds), Documents Illustrative of English Church History (New York, 1896), pp.481-484, accessed at <http://history.hanover.edu/texts/ENGref/er84>, October 9, 2012

**(c) The Uniformity Act, A.D. 1662.
14 Charles II, Cap. 4**

[Highlights and footnotes are the author's.]

[The Form of Assent, the Form of Declaration, and Section IX. 'What Persons shall not hold Ecclesiastical Promotion', are highlighted]

An Act for the Uniformity of Publique Prayers and Administrac[i]on of Sacraments & other Rites & Ceremonies and for establishing the Form of making ordaining and consecrating Bishops Preists and Deacons in the Church of England.¹³²⁶

Recital that in the First Year of Queen Eliz. there was one uniform Order of Church Service compiled; and enjoined to be used by 1 Eliz. c. 2.

that many Persons nevertheless refuse to come to their Parish Church; that by the Neglect of Ministers many Persons have been led into Schism; that His Majesty, according to His Declaration of 25th Oct, 1660, had granted a Commission to review the Book of Common Prayer, and that the Convocations were assembled for that Purpose; that they had presented to His Majesty a Book of Common Prayer, which he had allowed and recommended to Parliament that the same should be used in all Churches, &c.; that an universal Agreement in public Worship conduceth to settling the Peace of the Nation; Ministers in Churches, &c. to use the said Book of Common Prayer;; and to read the Morning and Evening Prayers therein.

Whereas in the first yeare of the late Queene Elizabeth there was one uniforme Order of Co[m]mon Service and Prayer and of the Administration of Sacraments Rites and Ceremonies in the Church of England (agreeable to the Word of God and usage of the Primitive Church) compiled by the Reverend Bishoppes and Clergy set forth in one Booke entituled The Booke of Co[m]mmon Prayer and Admimistration of Sacraments and other Rites and Ceremonies in the Church of England and enjoined to be used by Act of Parliament holden in the said First yeare of the said late Queene entituled An Act for the Uniformity of Co[m]mon Prayer and Service in the Church and Administration of the Sacraments very comfortable to all good people desirous to live in Christian conversation and most profitable to the Estate of this Realme upon the which the Mercy Favour and Blessing of Almighty God is in no wise so readily and plentifully poured as by Co[m]mon Prayers due useing of the Sacraments and often preaching of the Gospell with Devotion of the Hearers And yet this notwithstanding a great number of people in divers parts of this Realm following their owne sensualitie and liveing without knowledge and due feare of God do willfully and schismatically abstaine and refuse to come to their Parish Churches and other Publique places where Co[m]mon Prayer Administrac[i]on of the Sacraments and preaching of the Word of God is used upon the Sundayes and other dayes ordained&appointed to be kept and observed as Holy dayes And whereas by the great and scandalous neglect of Ministers in using the said Order or Liturgy so set forth and enjoined as aforesaid great mischeifs & inconveniencies during the times of the late unhappy troubles have arisen and grown and many people have beene led into Factions and Schismes to the great decay and scandall of the Reformed Religion of the Church of

¹³²⁶ 'Charles II, 1662: An Act for the Uniformity of Publique Prayers and Administrac[i]on of Sacraments & other Rites & Ceremonies and for establishing the Form of making ordaining and consecrating Bishops Preists and Deacons in the Church of England.', *Statutes of the Realm*: vol 5: 1628-80 (London, 1819), pp.364-370, accessed at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/reportaspx?compid=47307&strquery=1662act.of.uniformity>: March1, 2009

England and to the hazard of many souls [For prevention whereof in time to come for setting the Peace of the Church and for allaying the present distempers which the indisposic[i]on of the time hath contracted The Kings Majestie according to His Declaration of the Five and twentieth of October One thousand six hundred and sixty granted His Co[m]mission under the great Seale of England to severall Bishops and other Divines to [re (fn. 1)] view the Booke of Co[m]mon Prayer and to prepare such Alterations and Additions as they thought fitt to offer And afterwards the Convocations of both the Provinces of Canterbury and Yorke being by His Majesty called and assembled and now sitting His Majestie hath beene pleased to authorize and require the Presidents of the said Convocations and other the Bishoppes and Clergy of the same to reveiw the said Booke of Co[m]mon Prayer and the Booke of the Forme and manner of the making and consecrating of Bishops Preists and Deaco[m]ns And that after mature considerac[i]on they should make such Additions and Alterations in the said Bookes respectively as to them should seeme meet and convenient and should exhibit and present the same to His Majesty in writing for his further allowance or confirmation since which time upon full and mature deliberation they the said Presidents Bishops and Clergy of both Provinces have accordingly reviewed the said Bookes and have made some Alterations which they thinke fitt to be inserted to the same and some additionall Prayers to the said Booke of Co[m]mon Prayer to be used upon proper and emergent occasions And have exhibited and presented the same unto His Majestie in writing in one Booke entituled The Booke of Co[m]mon Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church according to the use of the Church of England together with the Psalter or Psalmes of David pointed as they are to be sung or said in Churches and [the (fn. 1)] forme and manner of making ordaining and consecrating of Bishoppes Preists and Deacons All which His Majesty having duly considered hath fully approved and allowed the same and reco[m]mended to this p[re]sent Parliament that the said Bookes of Co[m]mon Prayer and of the forme of Ordination and Consecration of Bishops Preists and Deacons with the Alterations and Additions which have beene soe made and p[re]sented to his Majesty by the said Convocations be the Booke which shall be appointed to be used by all that officiate in all Cathedrall and Collegiate Churches and Chappells and in all Chappells of Colledges and Halls in both the Universities and the Colledges of Eaton and Winchester and in all Parish Churches and Chappells within the Kingdome of England Dominion of Wales and Towne of Berwick upon Tweed and by all that make or consecrate Bishops Preists or Deacons in any of the said places under such Sanctions and Penalties as the Houses of Parliament shall thinke fitt. (fn. 2)] Now in regard that nothing conduceth more to the setting of the Peace of this Nation (which is desired of all good men) nor to the honour of our Religion and the propagation thereof then an universall agreement in the Publique Worshipp of Almighty God and to the intent that every person within this Realme may certainly knowe the rule to which he is to conforme in Publique Worship and Administration of Sacraments and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of England and the manner how and by whom Bishops Preists and Deacons are and ought to be made ordained and consecrated Be it enacted by the Kings most Excellent Majestie by the advice and with the consent of the Lords Spirituall and Temporall and of the Co[m]mons in this present Parlaiment assembled and by the Authority of the same That all and singuler Ministers in any Cathedrall Collegiate or Parish Church or Chappell or other place of Publique Worship within this Realme of England Dominion of Wales and Town of Berwick upon Tweed shall be bound to say and use the Morning Prayer Evening Prayer Celebrac[i]on and Administrac[i]on of both the Sacraments and all other the Publique and Co[m]mon Prayer in such order and forme as is menc[i]oned in the said Booke annexed and joyned to this present Act ((fn. 3)) and entituled The Booke of Co[m]mon Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church

according to the use of the Church of England together with the Psalter or Psalmes of David pointed as they are to be sung or said in Churches and [the (fn. 4)] forme or manner of making ordaining and consecrating of Bishops Preists & Deacons. And that the Morning and Evening Prayers therein contained shall upon every Lords day and upon all other dayes and occasions and att the times therein appointed be openly and solemnly read by all and every Minister or Curate in every Church Chappell or other place of Publique Worshipp within this Realme of England and places aforesaid

II. Parsons, Vicars, &c. publicly to read and declare their Assent to the Use of the same.

And to the end that Uniformity in the Publiq Worshipp of God (which is so much desired) may be speedily effected bee it further enacted by the Authority aforesaid That every Parson Vicar or other Minister whatsoever who now hath and enjoyeth any Ecclesiasticall Benefice or Promotion within this Realme of England or places aforesaid shall in the Church Chappell or place of Publiq[ue] Worshipp belonging to his said Benefice or Promotion upon some Lords day before the Feast of Saint Bartholomew which shall be in the yeare of our Lord God One thousand six hundred sixty and two openly publicly and solemnly read the Morneing and Evening Prayer appointed to be read by and according to the said Booke of Co[m]mon Prayer att the times thereby appointed and after such reading thereof shall openly and publicly before the Congregation there assembled declare his unfeigned assent & consent to the use of all things in the said Booke contained and prescribed [in these words and no other.

Form of Assent.

I. A. B. doe declare my unfaigned assent and consent to all and every thing contained and prescribed in and by the Booke intituled The Booke of Co[m]mon Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church according to the use of the Church of England together with the Psalter or Psalmes of, David pointed as they are to be sung or said in Churches and the form or manner of making ordaining and consecrating of Bishops Preists and Deacons.

III. Refusing so to do.

Deprivation.; Patrons may present.

And that all and every such person who shall (without some lawfull Impediment to be allowed and approved of by the Ordinary of the place) neglect or refuse to doe the same within the time aforesaid (or in case of such Impediment) within one Moneth after such Impediment removed shall (ipso facto) be deprived of all his Spirituall Promotions And that from thence forth it shall be lawfull to and for all Patrons and Donors of all and singuler the said Spirituall Promotions or of any of them according to their respective Rights and Titles to present or collate to the same as though the person or persons so offending or neglecting were dead.

IV. Every Person presented, to read the Prayers according to the said Book, and declare his Assent thereto.

Refusing so to do.; Deprivation.; Patrons may present.

And bee it further enacted by the Authority aforesaid that every person whoe shall hereafter be presented or collated or put into any Ecclesiasticall Benefice or Promotion within this Realme of England and places aforesaid shall in the Church Chappell or place of publiq[ue] worshipp belonging to his said Benefice or Promotion within two Monthes next after that he shall be in the actuall possession of the said Ecclesiasticall Benefice or Promotion upon some Lords day openly publicly and solemnly read the Morning and Evening Prayers appointed to be read by and according to the said Booke of Co[m]mon Prayer att the times thereby appointed and after such reading thereof shall openly and publicly before the Congregation there assembled declare his unfeigned assent and consent to the use of all things therein contained and prescribed according to the forme

before appointed And that all and every such person who shall (without some lawfull Impediment to be allowed and approved by the Ordinary of the place) neglect or refuse to doe the same within the time aforesaid (or in case of such Impediment within one Moneth after such Impediment removed) shall (ipso facto) be deprived of all his said Ecclesiasticall Benefices and Promotions And that from thenceforth it shall and may be lawfull to and for all Patrons and Donors of all and singuler the said Ecclesiasticall Benefices and Promotions or any of them (according to their respective Rights and Titles) to present or collate to the same as though the person or persons so offending or neglecting were dead

V. Incumbents of Livings residing and keeping Curates shall once in every Month read the Prayers, &c. according to the said Book.

Penalty £5.; Distress.

[And be it further enacted by the Authority aforesaid That in all places where the proper Incumbent of any Parsonage or Vicaridge or Benefice with Cure doth reside on his Living and keepe a Curate the Incumbent himselfe in person (not haveing some lawfull Impediment to be allowed by the Ordinary of the place) shall once (at the least) in every moneth openly and publicquely read the Comon prayers and Service in and by the said Booke prescribed and (if there be occasion) administer each of the Sacraments and other Rites of the Church in the Parish Church or Chappell of or belonging to the same Parsonage Vicarage or Benefice in such order manner and forme as in and by the said. Booke is appointed upon pain to forfeit the sum of Five pounds to the use of the poore of the Parish for every offence upon conviction by confession or proove of two credible Witnesses upon Oath before two Justices of the Peace of the County City or Town Corporate where the offence shall be comitted which Oath the said Justices are hereby empowered to administer) and in default of payment within ten dayes to be levied by distresse and sale of the goods and Chattells of the Offender by the Warrant of the said Justices by the Church wardens or Overseers of the Poore of the said Parish rendring the surplusage to the party

VI. Deans, Readers in the Universities, Parsons, School masters, &c. to subscribe the Declaration herein mentioned.

And be it further enacted by the Authority aforesaid That every Deane Canon and Prebendary of every Cathedrall or Collegiate Church and all Masters and other Heads Fellowes Chaplaines and Tutors of or in any Colledge Hall House of Learning or Hospitall and every Publique Professor and Reader in either of the Universities and in every Colledge elsewhere and every Parson Vicar Curate Lecturer and every other person in Holy Orders and in every School master keeping any publique or private Schoole&every person instructing or teaching any Youth in any House or private Family as a Tutor or School master who upon the First day of May which shall be in the yeare of our Lord God One thousand six hundred sixty two or at any time thereafter shall be Incumbent or have possession of any Deanry Canonry Prebend Mastershipp Headshipp Fellowship Professors place or Readers place Parsonage Vicarage or any other Ecclesiasticall Dignity or Promotion or of any Curates place Lecture or School or shall instruct or teach any Youth as Tutor or Schoolmaster shall before the Feast day of St. Bartholomew which shall be in the yeare of our Lord One thousand six hundred sixty two or at or before his or their respective admission to be Incumbent or have possession aforesaid subscribe the Declaration or Acknowledgement following scilicet.

Form of the Declaration.

I A. B do declare that it is not lawfull upon any p[re]tence whatsoever to take Armes against the King and that I do abhor that traiterous Position of taking Armes by His Authority against His Person or against those that are commissioned by him And that I will conforme to the Liturgy of the Church of England as it is now by Law established And I do declare that I do hold there lies no Obligac[i]on upon me

or on any other person from the Oath comonly called the Solemne League and Covenant to endeavour any change or alteration of Government either in Church or State And that the same was in it selfe an unlawfull Oath and imposed upon the Subjects of this Realme against the knowne Lawes and Liberties of this Kingdome.

Before whom to be subscribed.; Deans,&c. not subscribing the same; deprived.; Deanry,&c. void..

Which said Declaration and Acknowledgment shall be subscribed by every of the said Masters and other Heads Fellowes Chaplaines and Tutors of or in any Colledge Hall or House of Learning and by every publike Professor and Reader in either of the Universities before the Vice Chancellor of the respective Universities for the time being or his Deputy And the said Declaration or Acknowledgement shall be subscribed before the respective Archbishopp Bishopp or Ordinary of the Diocesse by every other person hereby enjoyned to subscribe the same upon pain that all and every of the persons aforesaid failing in such Subscription shall loose and forfeit such respective Deanary Canonry Prebend Mastership Headship Fellowship Professors place Readers place Parsonage Viccarage Ecclesiasticall Dignity or Promotion Curates place Lecture and School and shall be utterly disabled and (ipso facto) deprived of the same And that every such respective Deanry Canonry Prebend Mastership Headship Fellowship Proffessors Place Readers Place Parsonage Viccarage Ecclesiasticall Dignity or Promotion Curates Place Lecture and Schoole shall be void as if such person so failing were naturally dead

VII. Schoolmasters, &c. instructing in private Houses before License. (Fee for License.)

First Offence, Imprisonment; every other Offence, Imprisonment, and Fine of £5.; Parsons, &c. to procure Certificate of Subscription, and to read the same, with the Declaration, in Church, Penalty.; Parsonage, &c. void.

And if any Schoolmaster or other person instructing or teaching Youth in any private House or Family as a Tutor or School master [shall instruct or teach any Youth as a Tutor or Schoolmaster (fn. 7)] before Licence obtained from his respective Archbishop Bishop or Ordinary of the Diocesse according to the Lawes and Statutes of this Realme (for which he shall pay twelve pence onely) and before such subscription and acknowledgement made as aforesaid then every such Schoolmaster and other instructing and teaching as aforesaid shall for the first offence suffer three monthes Imprisonment without bail or mainprize and for every second and other such offence shall suffer three moneths Imprisonment without baile or mainprize and alsoe forfeit to his Majesty the su[m]m of five pounds And after such subscription made every such Parson Viccar Curate and Lecturer shall procure a Certificate under the Hand and Seale of the respective Archbishop Bishop or Ordinary of the Diocesse (whoe are hereby enjoyned and required upon demaund to make and deliver the same) and shall publickly and openly read the same togeather with the Declaration or Acknowledgement aforesaid upon some Lords day within three moneths then next following in his Parish Church where he is to officiate in the presence of the Congregation there assembled in the time of Divine Service upon pain that every person failing therein shall loose such Parsonage Vicarage or Benefice Curates place or Lecturers place respectively and shall be utterly disabled and (ipso facto) deprived of the same And that the said Parsonage Viccarage or Benefice Curates place or Lecturers place shall be void as if he was naturally dead

VIII. What Words to be omitted in the Declaration after March 25, 1682.

Provided alwaies that from and after the Twenty fifth day of March which shall be in the yeare of our Lord God One thousand six hundred eighty two there shall be omitted in the said Declaration or Acknowledgm[en]t so to be subscribed and read these words following scilicet.

And I do declare that I do hold there lies no Obligac[i]on on me or any other person from the Oath comonly called the Solemne League and Covenant to endeavor any change or

alteration of Government either in Church or State and that the same was in it selfe an unlawfull Oath and imposed upon the Subjects of this Realme against the knowne Lawes and Liberties of this Kingdome.

So as none of the persons aforesaid shall from thence forth be at all obliged to subscribe or read that part of the said Declaration or Acknowledgement.

IX. What Persons shall not hold Ecclesiastical Promotion.

Provided alwaies and be it enacted that from and after the Feast of St. Bartholomew which shall be in the yeare of our Lord One thousand six hundred sixty and two no person who now is Incumbent and in possession of any Parsonage Vicarage or Benefice and who is not already in Holy Orders by Episcopall Ordination or shall not before the said Feast day of St. Bartholomew be ordained Preist or Deacon according to the forme of Episcopall Ordination shall have hold or enjoye the said Parsonage Vicaradge Benefice with Cure or other Ecclesiasticall Promotion within this Kingdome of England or the Dominion of Wales or Town of Berwick upon Tweed but shall be utterly disabled and (ipso facto) deprived of the same And all his Ecclesiastical Promotions shall be void as if he was naturally dead.

X. Persons administering the Sacrament before they are ordained Priests;

Penalty £100; and Disability for One Year.

And bee it further enacted by the Authority aforesaid that no person whatsoever shall thenceforth be capable to bee admitted to any Parsonage Vicarage Benefice or other Ecclesiastical Promotion or Dignity whatsoever nor shall presume to consecrate&administer the Holy Sacrament of the Lords Supper before such time as he shall be ordained Preist according to the forme and manner in and by the said Booke prescribed unlesse he have formerly beene made Preist by Episcopall Ordination upon pain to forfeit for every offence the su[m]m of One hundred pounds One moyety thereof to the Kings Majesty the other moyety thereof to be equally divided betweene the Poore of the Parish where the offence shall be co[m]mitted and such person or persons as shall sue for the same by Action of Debt Bill Plaint or Information in any of His Majesties Courts of Record wherein no Essoine Protection or Wager of Law shall be allowed And to be disabled from taking or being admitted into the Order of Preist by the space of one whole yeare then next following

XI. Proviso for Aliens of Foreign reformed Churches.

Provided that the penaltics in this Act shall not extend to the Forreiners or Aliens of the Forrein Reformed Churches allowed or to be allowed by the Kings Majestie His Heires and Successors in England

XII. No Title to present by Lapse under this Act, but on Notice.

Provided alwaies that no title to conferre or present by lapse shall accrewe by any avoydance or deprivation (ipso facto) by vertue of this Statute but after six moneths after notice of such voidance or deprivation given by the Ordinary to the Patron or such sentence of deprivation openly and publiquely read in the Parish Church of the Benefice Parsonage or Vicarage becomeing void or whereof the Incumbent shall be deprived by vertue of this Act.

XIII. No other Form of Prayer to be used but according to the said Book.

Heads of Colleges, &c. within the time herein mentioned. to subscribe the 39 Articles mentioned. 13 Eliz. c. 12.; and declare their Assent thereunto; and to the said Book; and once in every Quarter of the Year read the Prayers, &c.; Suspension; and if Person so suspended do not within Six Months subscribe, then his Government, &c. void.

And be it further enacted by the Authority aforesaid that no Form or Order of Co[m]mon Prayers Administrac[i]on of Sacraments Rites or Ceremonies shall be openly used in any Church Chappell or other publique place of or in any Colledge or Hall in either of the Universities the Colledges of Westminster Winchester or Eaton or any of them. other then

what is p[re]scribed and appointed to be used in and by the said Booke And that the present Governour or Head of every Colledge and Hall in the [said (fn. 8)] Universities and of the said Colledges of Westminster Winchester and Eaton within one moneth after the Feast of St. Bartholomew which shall be in the yeare of our Lord One thousand six hundred sixty and two And every Governour or Head of any of the said Colledges or Halls hereafter to be elected or appointed within one moneth next after his Election or Collation and Admission into the same Government or Headshipp shall openly and publiquely in the Church Chappell or other publique place of the same Colledge or Hall and in the p[re]sence of the Fellowes and Scholars of the same or the greater part of them then resident subscribe unto the Nine and thirty Articles of Religion mentioned in the Statute made in the thirteenth yeare of the Reigne of the late Queene Elizabeth and unto the said Booke and declare his unfeigned assent and consent unto and approbation of the said Articles and of the same Booke and to the use of all the Prayers Rites and Ceremonies Formes and Orders in the said Booke prescribed and contained according to the form aforesaid And that all such Governours or Heads of the said Colledges and Halls or any of them as are or shall be in Holy Orders shall once (at least) in every quarter of the yeare (not having a lawfull Impediment) openly and publiquely read the Morning Prayer and Service in and by the said Booke appointed to be read in the Church Chappell or other publique place of the same Colledge or Hall upon pain to loose and be suspended of and from all [the (fn. 8)] Benefitts and Profitts belonging to the same Government or Headshipp by the space of Six moneths by the Visitor or Visitors of the same Colledge or Hall And if any Governour or Head of any Colledge or Hall suspended for not subscribing unto the said Articles and Booke or for not reading of the Morning Prayer and Service as aforesaid shall not att or before the end of Six monthes next after such suspension subscribe unto the said Articles and Booke and declare his consent thereunto as aforesaid or read the Morning Prayer and Service as aforesaid then such Government or Headshipp shall be (ipso facto) void

XIV. Proviso for reading the Prayers in Latin in Colleges, &c.

Provided alwaies that it shall and may be lawfull to use the Morning and Evening Prayer and all other Prayers and Service prescribed in and by the said Booke in the Chappells or other publique places of the respective Colledges and Halls in both the Universities in the Colledges of Westminster Winchester and Eaton and in the Convocations of the Clergies of either Province in Latine Any thing in this Act contained to the contrary notwithstanding (fn. 9)]

XV. Lecturer to read the 39 Articles of 13 Eliz. c. 12. and declare his Assent thereto; 13 Eliz. c. 12.; and at the first time of Preaching to read the said Common Prayers, and declare his Assent thereto; also upon the first Lecture Day of every Month.; Refusing, &c. so to do;; Disabled.

And be it further enacted by the Authority aforesaid [that no person shall be or be received as a Lecturer or permitted suffered or allowed to preach as a Lecturer or to preach or read any Sermon or Lecture in any Church Chappell or other place of Publique Worshipp within this Realme of England or the Dominion of Wales and Towne of Berwick upon Tweed unlesse he be first approved and thereunto licensed by the Archbishopp of the Province or Bishopp of the Diocesse or (in case the See be void) by the Guardian of the Spiritualities under his Seale and shall in ((fn. 10)) p[re]sence of the same Archbishop or Bishop or Guardian read the nine and thirty Articles of Religion mentioned in the Statute of the Thirteenth yeare of the late Queene Elizabeth with declaration of his unfeigned assent to the same And (fn. 11)] that every person and persons whoe nowe is or hereafter shall bee licensed assigned [or (fn. 11) >] appointed or received as a Lecturer to preach upon any day of the weeke in any Church Chappell or place of Publique Worship within this Realme of England or places aforesaid the first time he preacheth (before his Sermon)

shall openly publicly and solemnly read the Co[m]mon Prayers and Service in and by the said Booke appointed to be read for that time of the day and then and there publicly and openly declare his assent unto and approbation of the said Booke and to the use of all the Prayers Rites and Ceremonies Formes and Orders therein contained and prescribed according to the forme before appointed in this Act And alsoe shall upon the first Lecture day [of every moneth afterwards so long as he continues Lecturer or Preacher there at the place appointed for his said Lecture or Sermon before his said Lecture or Sermon openly publicly and solemnly read the Common Prayers and Service in and by the said Booke appointed to be read for that time of the day at which the said Lecture or Sermon is to be preached and after such reading there of shall openly and publicly before the Congregation there assembled declare his unfeigned assent and consent unto and approbation of the said Booke and to the use of all the Prayers Rites and Ceremonies Forms and Orders therein contained and prescribed according to the forme aforesaid (fn. 11)] And that all and every such person and persons who shall neglect or refuse to do the same shall from thenceforth be disabled to preach the said or any other Lecture or Sermon in the said or any other Church Chappell or place of Publique Worship untill such time as he and they shall openly publicly and solemnly read the Common Prayers and Service appointed by the said Booke and conform in all points to the things therein appointed and prescribed according to the purport true intent and meaning of this Act

XVI. Proviso where Lecture preached in Cathedrals, &c.

[Provided alwaies That if the said Sermon or Lecture be to be preached or read in any Cathedrall or Collegiate Church or Chappell it shall be sufficient for the said Lecturer openly at the time aforesaid to declare his assent and consent to all things contained in the said Booke according to the form aforesaid. (fn. 11)]

XVII. Persons so disabled preaching; Imprisonment in Common Gaol.

And be it further enacted by the Authority aforesaid That if any person who is by this Act disabled to preach any Lecture or Sermon shall during the time that he shall continue and remaine so disabled preach any Sermon or Lecture that then for every such offence the person and persons so offending shall suffer Three Monthes Imprisonment in the Co[m]mon Goal without baile or mainprize and that any two Justices of the Peace of any County of this Kingdome and places aforesaid and the Maior or other Cheife Magistrate of any City or Town Corporate within the same upon Certificate from the Ordinary of the place made to him or them of the offence committed shall and are hereby required to committ the person or persons so offending to the Goal of the same County City or Town Corporate accordingly

XVIII. The said Common Prayers to be read whenever any Sermon or Lecture is preached. Lecturer to be present.

[Provided alwaies and be it further enacted by the Authority aforesaid That att all and every time and times when any Sermon or Lecture is to be preached the Common Prayers and Service in and by the said Booke appointed to be read for that time of the day shall be openly publicly and solemnly read by some Preist or Deacon in the Church Chappell or place of Publique Worshipp where the said Sermon or Lecture is to be preached before such Sermon or Lecture be preached and that the Lecturer then to preach shall be present att the reading thereof

XIX. Proviso respecting University Sermons preached in the University Churches.

Provided neverthesse that this Act shall not extend to the University Churches in the Universities of this Realme or either of them when or att such times as any Sermon or Lecture is preached or read in the [said (fn. 13) Churches or any of them for or as the publick University Sermon or Lecture but that the same Sermons and Lectures may be preached or read in such sort and manner as the same have been heretofore preached or

read This Act or any thing herein contained to the contrary thereof in any wise notwithstanding. (fn. 11)

XX. Former Laws for the Uniformity of Prayers, &c. confirmed.

And be it further enacted by the Authority aforesaid that the severall. good Lawes and Statutes of this Realm which have beene formerly made and are now in force for the Uniformity of Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments within this Realme of England and places aforesaid shall stand in full force and strength to all intents and purposes whatsoever for the establishing and confirming of the said Booke intituled The Booke of Co[m]mon Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments and other Rites&Ceremonies of the Church according to the use of the Church of England together with the Psalter or Psalmes of David pointed as they are to be sung or said in Churches and the forme or manner of making ordaining and consecrating of Bishoppes Preists and Deacons herein before mentioned to be joyned and annexed to this Act and shall be applied practised and put in ure for the punishing of all offences contrary to the said Lawes with relation to the Booke aforesaid and no other.

XXI. Prayers relating to the Royal Family to be altered as required.

Provided alwaies and be it further enacted by the Authority aforesaid That in all those Prayers Letanies and Collects which doe any way relate to the King Queene or Royall Progeny the Names be altered and changed from time to time and fitted to the present occasion according to the direction of lawfull Authority.

XXII. A true printed Copy of the said Book of Common Prayer to be provided for Parish Churches, &c. at the Costs of the Parishioners. Penalty.

Provided alsoe and be it enacted by the Authority aforesaid that a true printed Copy of the said Booke intituled The Booke of Co[m]mon Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church according to the use of the Church of England together with the Psalter or Psalmes of David pointed as they are to be sung or said in Churches and the form and manner of making ordaining and consecrateing of Bishops Preists and Deacons shall att the costs and charges of the parishoners of every Parish Church and Chappelry Cathedrall Church Colledge and Hall be attained and gotten before the Feast day of St. Bartholomew in the yeare of our Lord One thousand six hundred sixty and two upon pain of forfeiture of three pounds by the moneth for so long time as they shall then after be unprovided thereof by every Parish or Chapelry Cathedrall Church Colledge and Hall making default therein.

XXIII. The Bishops of Hereford, St. David, Asaph, and Bangor to take Order that the said Book shall be translated into Welch, and had in Churches, &c.

and the Form of Prayer &c. therein to be used.; The same to be paid for by the Churchwardens out of the Parish Money.; Bishops to set the Price.; And one other Book in the English Tongue to be also had.; Proviso for the Use of the former Forms until the said Book can be had.

Provided alwaies and be it enacted by the Authority aforesaid That the Bishops of Hereford St Davies Asaph Bangor and Landaff and their Successors shall take such order among themselves for the souls health of the Flocks committed to their Charge within Wales That the Booke hereunto annexed be truly and exactly translated into the British or Welsh Tongue and that the [same (fn. 14)] soe translated and being by them or any three of them at the least viewed perused and allowed be imprinted to such number at least so that one of the said Bookes so translated and imprinted may be had for every Cathedrall Collegiate and Parish Church and Chapell of Ease in the said respective Diocesses and places in Wales where the Welsh is co[m]monly spoken or used before the First day of May One thousand six hundred sixty five And that from and after the imprinting and publishing of the said Booke so translated the whole Divine Service shall be used and said by the Ministers and Curates throughout all Wales within the said Diocesses where the Welsh

Tongue is co[m]monly used in the British or Welsh Tongue in such manner and forme as is prescribed according to the Booke hereunto annexed to be used in the English Tongue differing nothing in any Order or Form the said English Booke for which Booke so translated and imprinted the Church wardens of every the said Parishes shall pay out of the Parish [moneys (fn. 15)] in their hands for the use of the respective Churches and be allowed the same on their Account And that the said Bishops and their Successors or any three of them at the least shall sett and appoint the price for which the said Booke shall be sold And one other Booke of Common Prayer in the English Tongue shall be bought and had in every Church throughout Wales in which the Booke of Co[m]mon Prayer in Welsh is to be had by force of this Act before the First day of May One thousand six hundred sixty and four and the same Booke to remaine in such convenient places within the said Churches that such as understand them may resort at all convenient times to read and peruse the same and alsoe such as do not understand the said Language may by conferring both Tongues together the sooner attaine to the knowledge of the English Tongue Any thing in this Act to the contrary notwithstanding and untill printed Copies of the said Booke so to be translated may be had and provided The Form of Co[m]mon Prayer established by Parliament before the making of this Act shall be used as formerly in such parts of Wales where the English Tongue is not comonly understood

XXIV. Deans, &c. to obtain Copies of this Act and of the said Book;

to be kept by them and their Successors.; Copies of this Act and of the said Book to be delivered to the Courts at Westminster and the Tower of London.; Such Copies to be examined with the Original and certified; and thereupon accounted good Records.

And to the end that the true and perfect Copies of this Act and the said Booke hereunto annexed may be safely kept and perpetually preserved and for the avoiding of all disputes for the time to come Be it therefore enacted by the Authority aforesaid That the respective Deanes and Chapters of every Cathedrall or Collegiate Church within England and Wales shall at their proper costs and charges before the Twenty fifth day of December One thousand six hundred sixty&two obtain under the Great Seale of England a true and perfect printed Copy of this Act and of the said Booke annexed hereunto to be by the said Deanes and Chapters and their Successors kept and preserved in safety for ever and to be alsoe produced and shewed forth in any Court of Record as often as they shall be thereunto lawfully required And alsoe there shall be delivered true and perfect Copies of this Act and of the same Booke into the respective Courts at Westminster and into the Tower of London to be kept and preserved for ever among the Records of the said Courts and the Records of the Tower to be alsoe produced and shewed forth in any Court as need shall require which said Bookes soe to be exemplified under the Great Seale of England [shall be examined by such persons as the Kings Majties] shall appoint under the Great Seale of England (fn. 16)] for that purpose and shall be compared with the Originall Booke hereunto annexed and shall have power to correct and amend in writing any Error committed by the Printer in the printing of the same Booke or of any thing therein contained and shall certifie in writing under their Hands and Seales or the Hands and Seales of any three of them att the end of the same Booke that they have examined and compared the same Booke and find it to be a true and perfect Coppy which said Bookes and every one of them so exemplified under the Great Seale of England as aforesaid shall bee deemed taken adjudged and expounded to bee good and available in the Law to all intents and purposes whatsoever and shall be accounted as good Records as this Booke it selfe hereunto annexed Any Law or Custome to the contrary in any wise notwithstanding

XXV. Proviso for King's Professor of Law at Oxford for Prebend of Shipton.

Provided alsoe that this Act or any thing therein contained shall not be pp[re]judiciall or hurtfull unto the Kings Professor of the Law within the University of Oxford for or concerning the Prebend of Shipton within the Cathedrall Church of Saru[m] united and

annexed unto the place of the same Kings Professor for the time being by the late King James of blessed memory

XXVI. Proviso in respect of the 36th Article, one of the said 39 Articles.

Provided alwaies That whereas the Six and thirtieth Article of the Nine and thirtie Articles agreed upon by the Archbishops and Bishops of both Provinces and the whole Clergy in the Convocation holden at London in the yeare of our Lord One thousand five hundred sixty two for the avoiding of diversities of Opinions and for establishing of consent touching true Religion is in these words following vizt.

That the Booke of Consecration of Archbishops and Bishops and Ordaining of Preists and Deacons lately set forth in the time of King Edward the Sixth and confirmed at the same time by Authority of Parliament doth contain all things necessary to such consecration and ordaining neither hath it any thing that of it selfe is superstitious and ungodly And therefore whosoever are consecrated or ordered according to the Rites of that Booke since the second yeare of the aforementioned King Edward unto this time or hereafter shall be consecrated or ordered according to the same Rites We decree all such to bee rightly orderly and lawfully consecrated and ordered.

It be enacted And be it therefore enacted by the Authority aforesaid That all Subscriptions hereafter to be had or made unto the said Articles by any Deacon Preist or Ecclesiasticall person or other person whatsoever who by this Act or any other Law now in force is required to subscribe unto the said Articles shall be construed and [be (fn. 17)] taken to extend and shall be applied (for and touching the said Six and thirtieth Article) unto the Booke containing the forme and manner of making ordaining and consecrating of Bishops Preists and Deacons in this Act mentioned in such sort and manner as the same did heretofore extend unto the Booke sett forthe in the time of King Edward the Sixth mentioned in the said Six and thirtieth Article Any thing in the said Article, or in any Statute Act or Canon heretofore had or made to the contrary thereof in any wise notwithstanding

XXVII. Proviso for the Use of Book of Common Prayer, &c. as established by 1 Eliz. c. t. until the Feast of St. Bartholomew 1662.

Provided alsoe That the Booke of Co[m]mon Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments and other Rites and Ceremonies of this Church of England together with the form and manner of ordaining and consecrating Bishops Preists and Deacons heretofore in use and respectively established by Act of Parliament in the First and Eighth yeares of Queene Elizabeth shall be still used and observed in the Church of England untill the Feast of Saint Bartholomew which shall be in the yeare of our Lord God One thousand six hundred sixty and two.

Appendix II

Richard Baxter's Doctrinal Controversies

[At the end of his life, in *End of Doctrinal Controversies* (London, 1691), pp.22-23, Richard Baxter listed the controversies over doctrine which, in his view, most trouble the Churches.]

The forementioned causes of Divisions in general, do operate among Christians,

1. About God's Decrees and His Will in general.
2. About his Foreknowledge.
3. About Election in particular.
4. About Reprobation.
5. About his Providence and Predetermination of all actions in general.
6. About his causing or not causing Sin.
7. About Natural Power and Freewill,
8. About original Sin.
9. About Redemption by Christ.
10. About the Laws and Covenants of Innocency, Works and Grace.
11. About Universality and Sufficiency of Grace.
12. About Man's Power and Freewill since the Fall, to obey the Gospel.
13. About effectual Grace, and how God giveth it.
14. About the state of Heathens that have not the Gospel.
15. About the necessity of Holiness, and the state of moral Virtue.
16. About the necessity of Faith in Christ where the Gospel is made known.
17. About the state of Infants as to Salvation.
18. About the nature of Saving Faith.
19. About the nature of Pardon and Justification.
20. About the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness to Believers.
21. About the manner how Faith justifieth us, and how Faith is imputed to us for Righteousness.
22. Of Assurance of Justification and Salvation, and of Hope.
23. Of Good works and Merits, and how far we may trust to any thing in our selves.
24. Of Confirmation, Perseverance, and of danger and falling away.
25. Of Repentance, late Repentance and the Day of Grace, and the unpardonable Sin.
26. Of our Communion with Christ's Glorified Humanity, and with Angels and glorified Souls.
27. Of the state of separated Souls.
28. Of the Resurrection and Everlasting Life.

[Baxter then proceeded to define each doctrine at length, detailing 'the pacifick Truth which must unite us'.]

Appendix III

(a) Ecumenical Creeds

Second century: Apostles' Creed
 Fourth century: Nicene Creed
 Fifth century: Athanasian Creed

(b) Principal Post-Reformation Confessions, having relevance to British and European Christian belief

1517 The Ninety-Five Theses of Martin Luther
 1523 Sixty-seven Articles (Swiss Reformed/Zwingli)
 1527 Schleithem Confession (Anabaptist)
 1528 The Ten Theses of Berne
 1529 Luther's Small Catechism
 1529 Marburg Colloquy (Zwinglian/Lutheran)
 1530 Augsburg Confession (Lutheran)
 1530 Tetrapolitan Confession (German Reformed)
 1533 First Helvetic Confession (Swiss Reformed)
 1534 Basel Confession (Reformed)
 1536 The Genevan Confession (John Calvin)
 1536 The First Helvetic Confession (Heinrich Bullinger)
 1536 Ten Articles (Church of England)
 1537 Smalcald Articles (Martin Luther)
 1537 The Bishops' Book (Church of England)*
 1538 Geneva Catechism (John Calvin)
 1538 Thirteen Articles (Cranmer/Lutheran)*
 1539 Six Articles (Stephen Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester)*
 1542 Augsburg Confession Variata (Lutheran)
 1544 Waldensian Confession of Faith
 1549 Consensus of Zurich
 1553 Forty-Two Articles (Cranmer)
 1556 The Geneva Book of Church Order (Calvinist)

- 1559 Declaration of Doctrine (Church of England)
- 1559 Gallican (French) Confession (French Reformed)
- 1560 First Scotch Confession/Book of Discipline (Scottish Presbyterian)
- 1560 Body of Doctrine (Continental Reformed)
- 1561 The Eleven Articles (Church of England)*
- 1561 Belgic Confession (Calvinistic Dutch Protestants)
- 1562 The Helvetic Confession (Swiss Reformed)
- 1564 The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent (Roman Catholic)
- 1563 Thirty-Eight Articles (Church of England)
- 1563 Heidelberg Catechism (Reformed)
- 1564 The Profession of the Tridentine Faith (Roman Catholic)
- 1566 The Roman Catechism (Roman Catholic)
- 1566 Second Helvetic Confession (Swiss Reformed)
- 1571 Thirty-Nine Articles (Church of England)
- 1576 Formula of Concord (Lutheran)
- 1580 Book of Concord (Lutheran)
- 1581 Second Scotch Confession (Scottish Presbyterian)
- 1592 Saxon Visitation Articles (Lutheran/Saxony)
- 1595 Lambeth Articles (Church of England)*
- 1610 Arminian Articles
- 1611 The first Baptist Confession of Faith (General Baptist)
- 1615 Irish Articles (Irish Episcopal)
- 1618/19 Canons of the Synod of Dort
- 1629 The Confession of Cyril Lucris (Greek Orthodox, Patriarch of Constantinople)
- 1632 Dordrecht Confession of Faith (Dutch Mennonite)
- 1638 The National Covenant (Church of Scotland)
- 1644 First London Confession (Particular Baptist)
- 1647 Westminster Confession of Faith (Westminster Assembly)*
- 1653 The Agreement of the Associated Pastors and Churches of Worcestershire
- 1655 The Waldensian Confession (Piedmont Reformed)
- 1658 Savoy Declaration (Independent, Congregationalist)
- 1659 A Declaration of Several people called Anabaptists
- 1660 A Brief Confession (General Baptist)
- 1662 The Ordinal (Church of England)

- 1672 The Confession of Dositheus (Orthodox, Council of Jerusalem)
- 1675 Confession of the Society of Friends, Commonly Called Quakers
- 1677 Second London Confession (Particular Baptist)
- 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith (Calvinistic Baptists)
- 1707 Philadelphia Confession of Faith (American Baptist)
- 1784 Articles of Religion (United Methodist)
- 1801 American Revision of the Thirty-Nine Articles
- 1823 The Confession of Faith of the Calvinistic Methodists of Wales
- 1833 Declaration of the Congregational Union of England and Wales
- 1833 New Hampshire Confession (American Baptist)
- 1837 Auburn Declaration (American Presbyterian)
- 1846 First Evangelical Alliance Basis of Faith
- 1848 The Confession of the Free Evangelical Church of Geneva
- 1870 Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral (Anglican)
- 1887 The Richmond Declaration (Orthodox Quaker)
- 1888 Lambeth Quadrilateral (Anglican)
- 1920 Articles Of War For Salvation Army Soldiers
- 1922 The Basis of Faith of The Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches
- 1924 Auburn Affirmation (Presbyterian, U.S.A.)
- 1925 Baptist Faith and Message of 1925 (Baptist, U.S.A.)
- 1934 Theological Declaration of Barmen (German Evangelical Church)
- 1940 Doctrinal Statement of the Free Church Federal Council
- 1959 Statement of Faith of the United Church of Christ
- 1962-65 Vatican II (Roman Catholic)
- 1963 Baptist Faith and Message of 1963. (Southern Baptist, U.S.A.)
- 1966 The Baptist Affirmation of Faith 1966 (Strict Baptist)
- 1967 Confession of 1967 (United Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.)
- 1968 Credo of the People of God (Roman Catholic)
- 1968 Confession of Faith (United Methodist)
- 1968 A New Creed (United Church of Canada)
- 1970 Evangelical Alliance Statement of Faith (Revision)
- 1974 The Lausanne Covenant (Evangelical)
- 1978 The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy (Evangelical)
- 1986 Belhar Confession (Dutch Reformed)

- 1989 The Manila Manifesto (Evangelical)
- 1991 A Brief Statement of Faith (Presbyterian)
- 1993 The Reform Covenant (Anglican Reformed)
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*Not formally authorised

Select Glossary

From the *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms* (London and Louisville, Kentucky, 1996) unless otherwise stated.

adiaphora: (Greek: Things indifferent) Elements of faith regarded as neither commanded nor forbidden in Scripture and thus on which liberty of conscience may be exercised.

Amyraldism: The theological system of [the Huguenot], Moïse Amyrald (1596-1664), which modified orthodox **Calvinism's** teachings on God's eternal decrees in favour of a decree of universal redemption [hypothetical universalism], with no decree for reprobation.

Anabaptist: (From Greek: *Ana*, 'again' and *baptein*, 'to dip in water') One who advocates rebaptism in certain instances. Most prominently, the sixteenth-century reformers who renounced infant baptism, stressed the literal meaning of Scripture, and supported the separation of church and state.

Antinomian: (From Greek: *anti*, 'against,' and *nomos*, 'law') The view that there is no need for the law of God in the Christian life.

Apostolic succession: The belief that there is an Episcopal succession of events and persons going back to the twelve apostles of Jesus. Properly ordained bishops convey God's grace through this succession by the laying on of hands. It is considered crucial for ministry in the Roman Catholic, Eastern and some Anglican Churches.

Arianism: The teaching of the fourth-century theologian Arius (c.250-336) that Jesus is the highest created being but does not share the same substance as God the Father (Greek: *Heterousios*, 'of a different substance'). It was declared heretical by the Council of Nicea (325)

Arminianism: The teaching of Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609) which conflicted with **Calvinism**, particularly on issues of human sinfulness, predestination and whether or not salvation can be lost. Its classic five articles are: election based on divine foreknowledge of faith, universal atonement [requiring faith to be effective], salvation only by grace, grace as necessary but not irresistible, the possibility of falling from grace.

baptismal regeneration: The belief that salvation is conferred through baptism.

Baptist: One who belongs to Churches and denominations that reject infant baptism and practice believer's baptism, usually by immersion. The churches are usually **Congregational** in church government.

Calvinism: A system of Christian interpretation initiated by John Calvin (1509-1564) It includes an emphasis on predestination and salvation. Calvinism teaches: **total depravity**, **unconditional election**, **limited atonement**, **irresistible grace**, and the **final perseverance** of the saints. [Whether or not Calvin himself taught **limited atonement** is in dispute]

canon: (Greek: *kanon*, Latin: ‘rule’) An **ecclesiastical** decree from a church council or church body.

casuistry: (From Latin: *casus*, ‘case’) The application of ethical rules or norms to specific instances or cases in order to guide the conscience or conduct.

catechism: (Greek: *katechein*, ‘to instruct by word of mouth’) A means of instruction, often in question-and-answer form, that conveys a summary of Christian theological beliefs.

classis: The governing body of some denominations in the Reformed theological tradition, composed of clergy and ruling elders, corresponding to ‘presbytery’ in Presbyterian churches.

confession of faith: A proclamation or statement of beliefs held by a group of Christians or individual Christians. Confessions of faith are formal standards that serve as authoritative guides to the doctrinal beliefs of a church body.

confessional standard: The document or documents recognised by church bodies as being authoritative for belief and practice.

congregational form of church government: A form of church government in which governing authority is with the local congregation, which is autonomous and independent.

Congregationalist: One who is a member of a communion that practices a **congregational form of church government**.

conservative theology: A general term for theological viewpoints that seek to maintain a reverence for and connection with older, classical theological formulations.

conventicle: (Latin: *conventus*, ‘assembly’) A group meeting for worship or religious purposes outside the land or country’s established church.

covenant theology: A theological perspective most developed by seventeenth-century Reformed theologians. It focused on the ways in which the divine-human relationship has been established by ‘covenants.’ These include God’s covenants of **grace** and works, though the latter is not recognised by all Reformed theologians. See also **federal theology**.

dissent: A judgement that disagrees with official church teaching or practice.

Dissenter: One who withdraws from the national church (Anglican) of England on the basis of conscience during the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries. The term includes **Congregationalist**, **Presbyterian**, **Baptist**, and **Roman Catholic**.

dissident: (From Latin: *dissidere*, ‘to disagree’) A person or church group that leaves an already established body of Christian believers.

dogma: (Greek: *dogma* ‘that which seems to one,’ ‘an opinion’) A teaching or doctrine which has received official church status as truth. In the Roman Catholic Church it is a definitive or infallible church teaching.

dogmatics: (Greek: *dogma*, 'Dogma,' from *dokein*, 'to think,' 'to appear') The formal study of the Christian faith which presents its beliefs and doctrines in an organised and systematic way.

ecclesiastical: (From Greek: *ekklesia*, 'assembly called out,' 'church') Relating to the clergy, church organisations, administration, or governance. Contrasted with 'secular.'

ecumenical creeds: Statements of faith used by the whole church.

elder: (Greek: *presbyteros*, 'presbyter,' 'elder') In early Christian churches, a leader with governmental oversight. The Reformed tradition distinguishes between 'teaching' and 'ruling' elders.

episcopacy: (Greek: *episkopos*, 'overseer'; Latin: *episcopus*, 'bishop') The form of church government in which bishops oversee a diocese, as in Roman Catholicism, Orthodoxy, and Anglicanism.

Episcopalian: One who is a member of the Anglican Church (in England and Scotland) or the Episcopal Church in the U.S.A.

Erastianism: The view, argued by a Swiss professor of medicine at the University of Heidelberg, Thomas Erastus (1524-83) that the state has the right to exercise supreme authority over the church in all issues.

eschatology: (From Greek: *eschatos*, 'last,' and *logos*, 'study') Study of the 'last things' or the end of the world.

et cetera oath: Canon VI, in the 'Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiasticall' passed by the 1640 Convocation of the Province of Canterbury; a solemn undertaking to uphold Church of England episcopacy and hierarchy. (Author's definition)

exegesis: (Greek: *exegesis*, 'interpretation,' from *exegeisthai*, 'to draw out or to explain') The act of interpreting or explaining the meanings of verses or passages of Scripture.

experimental predestinarianism: The belief that men and women are able to prove to themselves that they are amongst the elect, to test the possibility in experience, on the basis of II Peter 1:10, 'make your calling and election sure'. (Author's definition, from Kendall, *Calvin*, p.8).

Family of Love (Familists): A sixteenth- to seventeenth-century group founded by Henry Nicholas (Hendrik Niclaes) (1501-1580), whose members were anticlerical and anti-Trinitarian in their mystical pantheistic beliefs.

federal theology: A form of **Calvinism** developed in the seventeenth century, that stressed the 'federal headship' of Adam, who acted as a representative of all humanity in a covenant of works established by God. See also **Covenant theology**.

final perseverance: (perseverance of the saints) (Latin: *Perseverantia sanctorum*) The belief that God's elect who believe in Jesus Christ are held secure by God's power, despite temptation and sin. Their salvation will not be lost.

General Baptist: A Baptist who belongs to a denomination which, from its beginnings in the early seventeenth century, has held to an **Arminian** rather than a **Calvinist** view of theology. (Author's definition). (See also **Particular Baptist**)

grace: (Greek: *charis*, Latin: *gratia*, 'favour,' 'kindness') Unmerited favour.

heresy: A view chosen instead of the official teachings of a church.

hermeneutics: (Greek: *hermeneutike* 'interpretation') The rules one uses for searching out the meaning of writings, particularly biblical texts.

hypothetical universalism: See 'amylaldism'.

Independents: Seventeenth and eighteenth-century adherents of the **Congregational** form of church government (Independency) as opposed to the established **Episcopal** form of the state church in England [and **Presbyterian** forms].

infralapsarianism: (Latin: *infra*, 'below' or 'after,' and *lapis*, 'fall') The view found in orthodox Lutheran and **Reformed theology** that in the order of God's decrees, God decreed to permit the fall of humanity into sin before decreeing to save some of humanity ('the elect') [See also **supralapsarianism**]

irresistible grace: (Latin: *Gratia irresistibilis*) The belief that God's **grace** as it works for the salvation of an individual will accomplish its purpose and will not be thwarted.

justification: (Greek: *dikaioo*; Latin: *iustificatio*, 'a reckoning or counting as righteous') God's declaring a sinful person to be 'just' on the basis of the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

lay elders: Church leaders who in **Presbyterian** forms of church government make up, along with the pastor, the session of a local church and are equally represented in other governing bodies such as synods and general assemblies.

limited atonement: A theological concept, found in **Calvinist** theology, which maintains that Christ died only for the elect, who are the only recipients of salvation. Also called **particular redemption**.

liturgical worship: Worship according to prescribed forms.

liturgy: (From Greek: *leitourgia*, 'work of the people') The service of God offered by the people of God in divine worship.

National Covenant: (1638) Scottish legal band of association that protested the attempt by King Charles I to establish **episcopacy** in Scotland. The Covenant defended the Reformed faith and was for all Scots to sign. Those who did were called Covenanters.

Oath of Engagement, 1649-54: the declaration of loyalty to the Commonwealth following the execution of King Charles I in 1649 which Members of Parliament, clergymen, members of the armed forces and officials in the courts of law, in municipal government and at universities and schools were required to sign. This was extended to include all adult males in 1650, but became impossible to enforce.

Particular Baptist: One who belongs to a group of Baptists that began in England in the seventeenth century (1633) that held to a **Calvinist** instead of an **Arminian** view of theology. [See, by comparison, **General Baptist**]

Particular redemption: See also **limited atonement**.

patristics: The study of the theological work of the early Christian church fathers.

Pelagianism: The theological views associated with the British monk Pelagius (c.354-c.420) who in theological debate with Augustine (354-430) argued for a totally free human will to do good and held that divine grace was bestowed in relation to human merit. These views were condemned at the Council of Ephesus (431)

Presbyter: (Greek: *presbyteros*, 'elder') A term used in **Presbyterian** forms of church government for **elders** who govern local congregations. Also used for 'bishops', priests and ministers.

Presbyterian: One who adheres to a form of church government where authority for decision making is in presbyteries, composed of clergy and lay elders from local churches. Presbyteries are linked to similarly structured larger bodies called "synods" and then to a general assembly.

real presence (of Christ): The view that Jesus Christ is truly present in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Theologians and church bodies have differed on the exact way that this real presence – as opposed to a figurative or symbolic presence – is to be understood.

Reformed theology: The theological tradition that emerged from the theological work of John Calvin (1509-64) and other reformers such as Huldrych Zwingli (1484-1531) and Heinrich Bullinger (1504-75), in contrast to Lutheran theology. Key aspects include God's initiative in salvation, and election, and union with Christ.

reprobation: (Latin: *reprobatus*, 'rejection') [The term used to describe the belief in] God's action of leaving some persons in the state of their own sinfulness so that they do not receive salvation but eternal punishment. In some theological views it is considered a decree of God for damnation.

Roman Catholic: One who adheres to the church body that recognises the bishop of Rome as the vicar of Christ and the supreme head of the universal Church.

sanctification: (Greek: *hagiasmos*, Latin: *sanctificatio*) The process or result of God's continuing work in Christian believers through the power of the Holy Spirit. In Protestant theology this occurs after justification and is growth in grace and holiness marked by good works.

schism: 'Schism may be defined as division within a Christian community, which may lead to external separation but does not involve disagreement over fundamental doctrines.' (Gerald Bonner, 'Schism and Church Unity' in Ian Hazlett (ed.), *Early Christianity: Origins and Evolution to AD 600* (London, 1991), p.218)

separatism (ecclesiastical): A withdrawal or advocacy of withdrawal from a church body by a person or groups of persons. The reasons given may vary widely.

Socinianism: The views of Faustus Socinus (1539-1604). A belief rooted in rationalism which rejected orthodox teachings on the Trinity, particularly with regard to the divinity of Christ. (Author's definition)

sola fide: (Latin: 'by faith alone') A slogan ...used ...to indicate that justification of the sinner (salvation) comes only to those who have faith and is not achieved through any good works.

sola gratia: (Latin: 'by grace alone') A slogan ...indicating that the basis for Christian salvation is solely by the grace of God and not any human achievement.

sola Scriptura: A slogan indicating that the Bible is the only authority for Christian faith and practice, and that it contains all knowledge necessary for salvation. (Author's definition)

supralapsarianism: (From Latin: *supra lapsum*, 'above the fall,' 'prior to the fall') A technical term used in **Calvinist** theology for the view that the election and reprobation of individual persons occurs in the decrees of God as logically prior to the decrees for the creation and the fall. [See also **infralapsarianism**]

temporary faith: An early modern Calvinist concept which seeks to explain the transitory faith of some: a supposed ineffectual calling by which the reprobate, without saving faith, yet give temporary evidence of zeal and good works. (Author's definition, from Kendall, *Calvin*, pp.7-8).

total depravity: The view that sinfulness pervades all areas of life, or the totality of human existence.

unconditional election: The belief that God elects to save some solely on the basis of God's freedom and love and not on the basis of any merit or efforts on the part of humans.

via media: (Latin: 'the middle way') A term used to describe the identity of Anglicanism as a middle way between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. It was coined by John Henry Newman (1801-90) during the Oxford movement. [It is not universally accepted as accurately descriptive of the Anglican position.]

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- _____ *Indulgence and Toleration Considered in a Letter unto a Person of Honour* (London, 1667) [Wing, O763]
- _____ *Of Communion with God the Father, Sonne, and Holy Ghost, Each Person Distinctly in Love, Grace, and Consolation: Or the Saints Fellowship with the Father, Sonne, and Holy Ghost, Unfolded* (Oxford, 1657) [Wing, O778], reprinted in Kelly M. Kapic and Justin Taylor (eds), *Communion with the Triune God*, (Wheaton, Illinois, 2007), consulted in the 2007 edition
- _____ *Of Schisme: the True Nature of it Discovered and Considered, With Reference to the present Differences in Religion* (Oxford, 1657) [Wing, O780]
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- _____ *A Review of the True Nature of Schisme, with a Vindication of the Congregationall Churches in England, from the Imputation thereof unjustly charged on them by Mr D. Cawdrey, preacher of the Word at Billing in Northampton-shire* (London, 1657) [Wing, O803]
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- _____ ‘A short defensative about Church Government, Toleration and Petitions about these things’ in *A Vision of Unchangeable free mercy, in sending the means of grace to undeserved sinners: Wherein Gods uncontrollable eternall purpose, in sending, and continuing the Gospel unto this Nation, in the midst of oppositions and contingencies, is discovered: his distinguishing mercy, in this great work, exalted, asserted, against opposers, repiners: In a Sermon Preached before the Honourable House of Commons, April. 29. being the day of Publike Humiliation. Whereunto is annexed, a short defensative about Church-government, (with a Country Essay for the practice of Church-government there) Toleration and Petitions about these things* (London, 1646) [Wing, O825], pp. 46-56
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